WOLVERHAMPTON
CHRONICLE

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WRAPPING PAPER BAN IS RUBBISHED

WRAPPING paper is banned from being recycled by council bosses – because it is too shiny.

Wolverhampton City Council sent out warnings to homes telling them not to put festive paper in recycling bins and instead dump it in household waste.

by Adam Thompson

It is the only local authority in the Black Country and South Staffordshire to impose the ban.

One mother has claimed that the move is 'ridiculous'

The cash-strapped council sent out 166,000 leaflets to households across the city detailing waste and recycling information which included how to dispose of wrapping paper. The leaflet offers a guide for householders.

A note warns residents: "Please remember we don't accept plastic bags, wrapping paper or polystyrene in the recycling bin."

Inspectors

Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell, Cannock and South Staffordshire councils all encourage residents to put wrapping paper in recycling bins.

Wolverhampton City Council spokesman Gurdip Thandi said: "Residents are advised not to put wrapping paper in recycling bins as it is often covered in shiny or metallic covering that affects the quality of paper produced in the recycling process.

"However, natural paper without such covering and cardboard rolls can be recycled."

Early this year – as part of a £70,000 communications budget – the council launched a smiling cartoon drinks can called 'Stan Can', informing residents to put the correct rubbish in the correct bin. It emerged that 'binspectors' were leaving on average 300 bins a day in Wolverhampton on the roadside for having the 'wrong' waste inside.

Mother-of-one Samantha Rogers, aged 27, from Oxley, Wolverhampton called the wrapping paper move 'ridiculous'.

She said: "The household waste bin isn't the biggest and over Christmas you accumulate more rubbish so with wrapping paper going into that bin it's going to be full. People should be entitled to recycle wrapping paper. It's ridiculous.

"With the bin days all over the place at Christmas it's just asking for problems."

Spokeswoman for Dudley Council, Kate Arnold, said: "Wrapping paper, cardboard rolls and gift cards are collected through the recycling service for all our residents who are on the new service, which is around two-thirds of them.

"Those who are on the old service can place wrapping paper in their black box but they will need to put cardboard in their back sack or take them somewhere for recycling if they prefer.

These remaining residents will all be on the new service by the spring of 2014."

Walsall Council had told its residents cards and wrapping paper can be put in the green recycling bin and advised and directed people to the town's High Street stores which are providing a card recycling service.

Nick Owen, fundraising officer for Guide Dogs, and Lara the dog, meet the colourfully-dressed staff at Bamboo Hair Salon in Wolverhampton

Colourful staff collar funds for guide dogs

HAIRDRESSERS proved they were colourful characters when they donned crayon outfits for a fundraiser.

The stylists at Bamboo Hair on Darlington Street, surprised their clients when they dressed up as Crayola Crayons for the Guide Dogs charity.

The group were inspired by a client who told them they were dressing up as a crayon for Halloween.

Manager of the Wolverhampton salon Stephen Hollings said: "We just thought it was such a fantastic idea, we got on the internet to see if we could order some costumes."

Extend

Mr Hollings said they hold dress-up days for charity at Christmas time every year for various charities.

He said: " We usually just dress up on Christmas Eve but this year we have decided to extend it, to raise even more money. This year we chose the Guide Dogs charity.

"They train up the puppies. We chose this charity because we all love dogs in this salon, and it is something we feel really passionate about."

The salon asked customers to make a donation. Staff are hoping to raise around £300 in all.

Councils to lose out on £100m in grants

COUNCILS in the West Midlands are to be stripped of around £100m in government grants next year, it has been announced.

Local authorities had been drawing up multi-million pound cuts after being warned of reductions earlier this year. Officials were due to spend the Christmas period finalising where savings could be made.

But one senior councillor has already said it will leave his authority £22m even worse off than expected.

Difficult

Wolverhampton City Council has drawn up £98m of cuts over five years but is predicting it will need to find £120m by 2018 as a result of the latest figures.

Councillor Andrew Johnson said: "We are very concerned at the worsening of our financial position. The cuts are making it extremely difficult to deliver a balanced budget."

The council is already drawing up plans to axe 1,000 jobs.

Sandwell's Councillor Steve Eling said he believed the confirmed figures would leave the authority £200,000 worse off than predicted.

Dudley's leader Councillor David Sparks said: "It's frequently the case that pre-Christmas figures are altered in the light of detailed negotiations."

And Walsall's leader Mike Bird said the figures would leave his council £25,000 'adrift' next year.

Baths petition tops 600 mark

AN ONLINE petition calling for the future of a swimming pool to be saved has passed the 600 mark.

Hundreds of people have logged on to show their support for Wolverhampton's Central Baths.

Council chiefs have warned the centre could be at risk as part of £98 million cuts. There have also been a number of paper petitions.

Hospital chief in pledge to nurses

LOCAL nurses who are good enough will be given jobs, the New Cross Hospital chief has pledged.

This message comes after the Wolverhampton hospital announced it was taking on 170 staff from overseas in the next year.

Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital has been criticised for the staffing move, which will see £3.6million spent in a bold recruitment drive on new nurses.

But its chief executive pledged that no local nurse – including those training at the University of Wolverhampton – would be turned away from the hospital if they were up to standard.

Training

David Loughton said he wanted to make assurances to local people there would always be jobs for them at the Wednesfield site.

The extra 170 nurses are being hired on top of the hospital's usual staff recruitment.

"If you complete your training and you're up to standard, there's a job for you," Mr Loughton, chief executive of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, said.

Around 15 per cent of the New Cross nurses leave each year, mostly due to retirement or taking jobs at other hospitals.

Mr Loughton said he would always prefer to take on local people.

"The 170 from abroad is a one-off hike," he added.

Arson theory on Strykers blaze

A BLAZE which destroyed the Strykers bowling alley is believed to have been started deliberately.

The Wolverhampton alley in Bushbury Lane burnt to the ground last week.

West Midlands Police spokesman Pete Edney confirmed the fire was being treated as arson and said any witnesses should contact the force.

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Millions to be invested in New Cross

TENS of millions of pounds will be invested in Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital after final proposals for it to take over Cannock Chase Hospital were unveiled.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt will be asked to rubber-stamp the plans by the end of February but if he gives the go- ahead, New Cross chief executive David Loughton said £50 million would be ploughed into the two hospitals he will be running.

He welcomed the recommendation that the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust takes on Cannock. It means patients will travel to Cannock for elective surgery, with shuttle buses from New Cross.

"This is confirmation of what we have been working on for some time now," Mr Loughton said. "It's a good step for Wolverhampton and Cannock and we are now able to fully understand what it is we have to do. A lot of the attention is on Stafford but this has had huge implications on us in Wolverhampton as well.

"I think having in-patient surgery and elective care in Cannock is a really positive move.

Challenge

"As a combined emergency and elective hospital in Wolverhampton we are having operations cancelled day after day. Having two separate hospitals will help solve that. Cannock has not had the same stigma as Stafford and I think this transformation is a small transaction and will easily be managed."

But he admitted it would be a 'big challenge' to encourage patients to travel from Wolverhampton to go to Cannock for treatment. He added: "The big challenge for us is that we are going to have to encourage patients from Wolverhampton to go to Cannock. I have worked with the council and MPs and we are in a very good place."

He also suggested Stafford Hospital should change its name because of its negative image following the scandal of appalling care there – a stigma Cannock does not have.

Around 800 employees at Stafford and Cannock hospitals will be employed by the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust under the changes and 350 staff from Wolverhampton will go to Cannock, 150 more than previously said.

Sound of screams will never go away

"SHE just ran to me in a massive ball of flames". A mother recalled the horrifying moment her three-year-old daughter was badly burned after dancing too close to a fire at their family home.

Ashling Doyle is now a happy seven-year-old who enjoys dancing and sports, but her mother Karen Doyle says she does not want any other families to go through the same ordeal.

She is urging people to be more fire-aware and has issued a warning to others about open fires, as health bosses revealed the number of accidents in the home rises over the festive period.

It was just before Ashling's fourth birthday in 2010 when she had returned from a day out and was standing near to the fire.

A keen dance fan, the youngster was jigging around when her denim mix outfit caught light.

Ashling, who attends Birches First School in Codsall, was left with serious burns to the bottom half of her body and spent eight weeks in hospital.

Specialist

Her mother Karen, aged 42, said: "What happened to Ashling changed our little world. She had come back from a day out with her father and she was really happy. These kind of things have a tendency to happen when life is good.

"She was cold though so she was warming up near the fire and was dancing away. "She got too close and the skirt she was wearing caught fire.

"She just ran to me in a massive ball of flames. The sound of the screaming is something that will never go away."

In the moments that followed, Karen tried to take the burning clothes off her daughter and ran to get help.

Paramedics, who Karen says are 'unsung heroes', were quick to arrive and the youngster was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital where she had a series of skin grafts. "We are so lucky to have somewhere like the specialist burns unit at Birmingham Children's Hospital," said Karen.

"It's a little gem. Everyone there and everyone who helped us was brilliant."

Although Ashling may have to have skin grafts in the future, she does not let what happened to her get in the way of enjoying life.

She is a keen dancer and recently performed on the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre in the Carol Sutti Dance Show.

"A couple of years on from it now and she is just unbelievable," said Karen, who lives with partner Philip Turner, aged 44, in Codsall, and also has a stepdaughter Georgie, aged 17.

"She's fine. I still get flashbacks all the time. There doesn't have to be a trigger, it can just be a tail-light on a car or something and I can just picture her on fire.

"I don't want other families to go through the same thing so I would just urge them to think carefully about open fires and where they put candles."

Claire Thomas, from Birmingham Children's Hospital's burns unit, said: "Unfortunately at this time of year, we do get a lot of little girls coming in with injuries like this, especially with party dresses on and princess dresses.

"Any type of fire, not just open fires but gas fires can be a danger and can lead to this sort of accident."

Seven-year-old Ashling Doyle was badly burned after her skirt set alight as she danced near the fire

LoneStar new HQ a boost for jobs

MANUFACTURING firm LoneStar Group is to build a new £7.5m headquarters, safeguarding more than 300 jobs.

The new headquarters and manufacturing and distribution centre of excellence will be built in Wednesbury, near junction nine of the M6.

Employees from the company's existing sites in the Black Country – two at Willenhall and another at Bilston – will transfer to the new site along with staff from the head office in Kennicott House in Wednesfield. The development is due to be completed by next summer.

High class

The new plant will feature high-class manufacturing and laboratory facilities, warehousing and offices.

The site is currently occupied by Aqualux Products, which will leave early in the new year.

It is no more than 4.2 miles from LoneStar's existing head office and West Midlands subsidiaries PRD Fasteners Ltd at Monmer Close, Willenhall, Eurofast Petrochemical Supplies Limited at Planetary Industrial Estate, Willenhall, and Triplefast International Ltd at Oxford Street Industrial Estate, Bilston.

Insight on the work of guide dogs

WEST Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Bob Jones took part in a blindfold walk to raise awareness of the work of Guide Dogs.

He visited Guide Dogs for the Blind in Harborne.

Mr Jones was given key information about the political and practical issues affecting the charity and guide dog users.

He said: "I'd like to thank Guide Dogs for the Blind for arranging this visit, which offered real insight into their excellent work and the key issues facing Guide Dog owners.

"I was particularly interested to learn that the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, will make it a specific offence for an out-of-control dog to attack an assistance dog – such as a guide dog."

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Drive loan idea over parking

HOMEOWNERS could be asked to loan or rent out their driveways under plans to tackle problem parking around a school in Essington.

It is one of a string of ideas being looked at to try to solve long-running parking problems.

Parish councillor David Clifft said the poor parking near to a school in the village has got so bad it is an 'accident waiting to happen'.

The idea would see people whose driveways are unoccupied at the time when children are arriving and leaving school to allow parents to use them.

Shame

Councillor Clifft said it could involve a loan or even a rental agreement.

Problems have centred around bad parking near St John's Primary School in the village. Earlier this month, residents were urged to name and shame parents who were parking illegally outside the school.

They said it was a 'last resort' to encourage people to park sensibly.

Councillor Clifft said another option would be to fine people who are caught parking illegally. But he said the idea of loaning out driveways could benefit both homeowners and parents.

"There are advantages not only for parents but also for homeowners," he said.

"The house would look like it has somebody living there because it would have a car on its drive."

Pet helpers short-listed for award

A GROUP of volunteers who help pets in need have been shortlisted for an award.

Helpers at Wolverhampton PDSA charity store are up against three other teams in the retail volunteer of the year category in the organisation's annual awards.

The volunteer team at the store in the Mander Centre raises money for sick and injured pets in the city.

PDSA store manager Ed Blackwell, who nominated the team for the award, said: "We have an extremely vibrant and enthusiastic team, who always see the positives out of life."

The team has almost 40 members in total and a core set of eight volunteers. Winners will be announced in the New Year.

Hundreds of youngsters living with addict parents

MORE than 500 parents in Wolverhampton are receiving treatment for drug or alcohol abuse while living with their children.

The revelation comes as part of a serious case review held into the death of 23-month-old Daniel Jones from the city, who died after consuming heroin.

The youngster died in the bed he shared with his mother Emma Bradburn and father Simon Jones – both recovering addicts. The pair are currently in prison following his death.

A serious case review revealed that Daniel's death may have been avoidable if professionals had recognised the full extent of the risks facing him. But it has also emerged there are 539 parents known to the authorities who are getting help for drug or alcohol abuse but still living with their children.

Alan Coe, chairman of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board, said being drug or alcohol dependent did not necessarily mean people were not able to look after their children properly.

He said: "In Wolverhampton, the number of drug-dependent parents is currently 539, who are receiving help and support.

"Nationally, there are 250,000 children living with drug-dependent parents but the vast majority are well cared for. It doesn't mean parents can't look after their children.

"There are plenty of adults who can sufficiently compartmentalise their life."

But Mr Coe said the tragic death of Daniel Jones showed professionals had to be more effective in challenging families where there are such issues and there must be a 'healthy scepticism' from professionals.

Drug death of son Daniel 'may have been avoided'

THE death of little Daniel Jones from a heroin overdose may have been avoidable if agencies involved with his family had fully acknowledged the risks he faced, it has emerged.

The 23-month-old died at his home in Wolverhampton after consuming the drug.

A serious case review into his death revealed it had not been foreseen by any of the professionals who dealt with Daniel and his parents, both of whom were recovering drug addicts. But it found the tragedy may have been avoidable 'had they acknowledged the full extent of the potential risks Daniel faced as a result of his parents' drug and alcohol abuse'.

The young boy was found dead in the bed he shared with his mother Emma Bradburn and father Simon Jones, both with a criminal past, at their home in Windsor Avenue in Penn, in the early hours of May 29, 2012.

The review found professionals failed to look beyond the fact Daniel was a happy and healthy little boy.

Perspective

And because the family was considered 'relatively affluent' after Bradburn received a compensation award after a car crash, the report said it was possible workers had viewed them differently to other parents with drug problems.

The report also said workers should have looked past the fact that the parts of the home that they saw were well presented. While the downstairs of the property was clean and tidy, a £3,000 cannabis farm was later discovered upstairs.

'They may have looked beyond Daniel's apparent well-being and given more thought to what life was like from Daniel's perspective," the report says.

A total of 44 recommendations have now been made following his death. The serious case review reveals all professionals had been aware both parents used illicit drugs.

But there was 'insufficient consideration given by all of the practitioners to finding out about and challenging the parents' use of drugs in the presence of Daniel'. The report also says nobody asked where Daniel was sleeping.

"Had they done so the immediate risks to Daniel may have been identified and his death prevented," it says.

One of the key recommendations put in place following Daniel's death is making the whole family the focus of drug and alcohol treatment. It also calls for agencies to work together better. Alan Coe, chairman of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, which ordered the review, said: "Everyone we spoke to, without exception, described Daniel as a happy, healthy little boy who was developing exactly as he should be."

He added: "What comes across very strongly from this serious case review is that practitioners who worked with Daniel and his family should have looked beyond his apparent well-being and understand what life was like from his perspective."

Mr Coe added: "A lot of profesionals saw the outward signs, which were immediately positive for Daniel. This was not a child being beaten or abused or anything like that.

"He was a happy normal child, everyone said that. But people didn't put in sufficient challenges.

"Often people who use drugs are good enough parents but you need to be careful and challenge more.

"The most obvious thing to me was nobody asked the question how do you keep your drugs safe? Just because things look alright doesn't mean you shouldn't challenge them."

The tragedy came two weeks after social services stopped monitoring Daniel.

Jones, aged 30, admitted Daniel's manslaughter and was jailed for six years while Bradburn, 29, pleaded guilty to causing or allowing the death of their child and was jailed for four years.

Criminal past – Daniel's father Simon Jones

Drug user – mother Emma Bradburn

Daniel Jones, who died aged just 23 months old of a heroin overdose

NEWS in brief

Man, 62, died from overdose

A MAN died of an overdose of a drug meant to help his illness, a court has heard.

Police forced entry into the home of Ronald Hodges in Enville Road, Wolverhampton on October 31 to find the 62-year-old dead inside, Smethwick Coroner's Court heard.

Mr Balmain concluded he died from a self administered excess of Amitriptyline.

A toxicology report found 6.4 milligrams of the anti-depressant in his blood.

Success over sale of homes

TWENTY two homes have been sold in five months in a development in Wolverhampton city centre.

The Horizon scheme had blighted the city skyline for three years after the housing market slowed.

But it has since been relaunched and bosses at Barratt Homes say it has proved hugely popular.

The development, near the Low Level Station, has both one and two bedroom apartments.

Katie Yates, Sales Manager at Barratt West Midlands says she has been overwhelmed by the response of homebuyers looking to buy a property at Horizon: "The development has been a tremendous success from a sales point of view."

Jobs boost as new pub opens

A NEW pub has opened its doors near Wolverhampton – creating dozens of new jobs.

The Inn at Shipley, has been created out of the former Thornscroft restaurant after five months of extensive building work.

The pub, on the Bridgnorth to Wolverhampton road in Shipley, will be run by Rachel Lloyd, who said: "We've created some 50 jobs and will be using local produce wherever practical."

Liam's luck wish

ONE Direction's Liam Payne took to Twitter to wish members of a Black Country performing arts company luck in their upcoming show.

The 20-year-old was a member of Sedgley-based Pink Productions before finding fame.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

HERE'S a nasty new twist on the 'update your email account' scam designed by internet crooks to extract your personal details. This time the message is : "Your Five incoming mails were placed on hold status due to the recent upgrade to our database, In order to receive the messages, click here to update your account." The threat is that they have your emails. They don't. And if you hover your cursor over the alleged sender's name, in this case "BT Customer Care," it should reveal the true (and probably hijacked) email address of the sender. You can pass this information on to BT but I'm not sure they're interested.

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

ONE of the most enduring feminist myths is that if women were in charge, this world would be a much nicer place. Women (it is alleged) are gentler, kinder and more co-operative than the wicked old male of the species. This theory does not explain the terrible mess that the lady-led Girlguiding UK has made of the vexed issue of recruits swearing their promise to God. The Scouts, led by that ultimate alpha-male Bear Grylls as Chief Scout, faced the same dilemma. They consulted widely and then opted for an alternative Godless promise to suit atheists and agnostics. It's a free choice – problem solved. Girlguiding UK, in contrast, has imposed a hardline no-God promise on all newcomers which has caused great division and distress. Dissenting groups are now being threatened with expulsion from the movement. So in a movement designed exclusively for girls, whatever happened to the kindly female qualities? Maybe they should put a man in charge.

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

THAT HS2 timeline in full. 2009: Government proposes the new line. 2010: First HS2 report paper published. December 2013: MPs of the Commons Transport Committee declare that HS2 is "essential" for the UK's future. So something we had never heard of four years ago is suddenly essential. How stupid do they think we are?

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

WHAT'S red, has 13 buttons and drives you bonkers? It is the DAB digital radio I bought in a daringly progressive moment a few years ago and which lies, unused, on a windowsill. I haven't a clue how to make it go. This week, thank heavens, the Government announced a stay of execution for FM frequencies. Ed Vaizey, the communications minister, says: "I absolutely believe that the future of radio in this country is digital." And that's where it should remain. Firmly in the future.

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

SO FAREWELL, Ronnie Biggs. We should never celebrate criminals or their crimes, but you had to admire Biggs's cheek. In one interview, repeated last week, Biggs claimed that the chief purpose of prison is to rehabilitate offenders and, as he had rehabilitated himself, it was not necessary for him to serve his term. Did anybody not smile?

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

LOOKING back, the Great Train Robbers' haul of £2.6 million seems puny. Inflation has soared and at today's values it would be worth about £46 million. But something else has changed. Back in 1963 this robbery horrified the nation because it was a calculated assault on national icons we cherished and respected: the Treasury, the Post Office, the night-mail train and, above all, our fine banking industry. If someone stole £46 million from the banks today, would we be horrified? Or would we reflect on what a tiny sum this was, compared to the billions lost through greed and fraud when the banking system imploded? Respectable men in smart suits cost us far, far more than Biggs and his gang.

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

AFTER much study, researchers at the University of California have concluded that men who marry attractive women are happier than those who do not. Good to see the Department of the Bleedin' Obvious is as busy as ever.

❒❒❒❒❒❒❒

AS the row over sexually segregated audiences at British universities rumbles on, Aston University declares that it would tolerate such an arrangement at religious discussions so long as it was voluntary. And what if an audience voluntarily decided they'd like to smoke?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Drop in numbers out of work in city

JOBLESS queues are shrinking dramatically in Wolverhampton and across the country.

UK unemployment fell by 99,000 in the three months to October, with 2.39 million people out of work, said the Office for National Statistics. It is the biggest fall in unemployment in more than a decade, while the unemployment rate has dropped to 7.4 per cent – its lowest in four years.

Across the West Midlands the unemployment figure plunged by 26,000 to 240,000. At the same time the number of people in work in the UK topped 30 million for the first time on record – up almost half a million compared to a year ago.

Private sector employment reached a record high of 24.4 million, and long-term and youth unemployment also fell. But 1.47 million people were in part-time jobs because they could not find full-time work, the highest total since records began in 1992.

The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance last month fell by 36,700 to 1.27 million. The jobless numbers differ because not everyone classed as unemployed is eligible to claim the allowance.

In Wolverhampton, which still has one of the UK's highest rate of claimants at 6.5 per cent of the working population, the claimant count fell by 502 to 10,387, while across the West Midlands as a whole it fell 5,836 to 129,248 – 3.6 per cent.

In Walsall the numbers claiming were down 385 to 8,120, Dudley 508 to 8,188. In South Staffordshire it was 1,265, down 1.9 per cent.

Blood tests were not taken, inquest told

A TEACHING assistant was sent away from hospital twice by staff believing she had a stomach bug, but died on her third visit with blood poisoning, an inquest heard.

Naomi Dawes-Dickson was not given a blood test on her two first visits to New Cross Hospital's accident and emergency department in Wolverhampton.

And tributes have been paid to the 'wonderful' teaching assistant from Wolverhampton who relatives said would be 'missed endlessly'.

Relatives of Naomi Dawes-Dickson spoke of their love for the church-goer who they said was loved by all – after a doctor told an inquest that blood tests should have been taken from her on the day she went to hospital twice before her death.

Smethwick coroner's court heard that she went to hospital due to vomiting and diarrhoea at 4am on October 2 2011. Doctors said it was likely to be viral gastroenteritis, and the 45-year-old was sent home. She returned at 11.30pm. She was seen by a nurse and junior doctor.

Deteriorated

No blood tests were taken and no antibiotics given. She was discharged. Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said it was not possible to say that she had the infection when she visited the hospital the first two occasions. He recorded a verdict of natural causes.

Naomi Dawes-Dickson, who had worked at Eastfield Primary School in Wolverhampton, was sent home from New Cross Hospital's accident and emergency department on two occasions, but later died of an infection, an inquest has heard.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said further tests were warranted on her second visit to hospital which may have identified the infection.

Mrs Dawes-Dickson's twin sister Ruth Dawes, aged 48, described her as 'my right hand, my best friend, she meant the world to me and everyone else'. Mrs Dawes-Dickson's husband Everton Dickson of Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton said following the inquest: "She was such an asset to me and I will miss her endlessly."

After her first visit to New Cross Hospital on October 2, 2011, Mrs Dawes-Dickson returned hours later when her condition deteriorated.

She was initially seen by a triage nurse and then junior doctor, Dr Maliha Chowdhury, but no blood tests were taken.

The hearing heard the doctor did not conduct blood tests or assess the level of Mrs Dawes Dickson's dehydration, and did not administer antibiotics. She gave her two litres of fluid, and the nurse discharged her.

Dr Chowdhury did not see her to assess whether the rehydration process had helped, but had authorised the discharge after seeing the nurse's notes

Mr Balmain asked: "Do you think you should have assessed the level of dehydration?"

She answered: "In retrospect, that was warranted. I went on what I could see in front of me in terms of dehydration."

She told the hearing: "At the time I didn't think she was ill enough to be admitted."

She said she had thought that due to the vomiting and diarrhoea she needed fluid. The hearing heard the hospital has a policy that if a patient visits the accident emergency department on more than one occasion in a seven day period, they should be seen by a senior physician before they are discharged.

When asked about this Dr Chowdhury answered: "At that time I wasn't aware of the policy. I didn't think that she was ill enough to see someone more senior at that time."

The next day Mrs Dawes-Dickson was admitted to A&E again, before she was taken to intensive care and died. A post mortem concluded organ failure which caused the cardiac arrest, due to the infection streptococcal septicemia.

Expert witness Dr Alistair Makin said the blood tests could have indicated there was an infection, which then would have been treated with antibiotics and investigated further.

But the inquest heard that it would not be possible to say whether the vomiting and diarrhoea were a symptom of the infection, or whether she had a viral gastroenteritis and then later contracted the infection. The hearing was told someone could succumb to streptococcal septicaemia within hours.

Beautiful

Senior coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict of natural causes. He said it was not justified to say that Mrs Dawes-Dickson's illness was due to the streptococcal infection, as it was not possible to say that she had the infection when she visited the hospital on the first two occasions.

He said: "Investigations were warranted on the second occasion (she visited hospital) but were not fully implemented. It it is not possible to say whether she was suffering from the infection that led to her death."

Mrs Dawes-Dickson's sister Ruth added: "It's just not the same anymore.

"I expect to see her come bounding through the door with her beautiful smile, but that will never happen again."

The teaching assistant Naomi Dawes-Dickson was sent home from hospital twice

Praise for nurse as man jailed for abuse

A JUDGE has commended a district nurse for helping to bring a child abuser to justice.

Judge Michael Challinor said it was thanks to Tracey Knowles that a man who regularly hit his eight-year-old stepson with a belt and cane has been locked behind bars.

Ms Knowles called police to the man's Wolverhampton address in April after hearing a child's screams and a man shouting, the city's crown court was told.

Listen

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, prosecuting, said: "She was so concerned that having made that call to police she sat in her car, she continued to listen to what was going on and could hear what she thought was a child being restrained. It sent a chill through her body.

"What, in fact, was going on was the defendant was assaulting his eight-year-old stepson."

The child said he had tried to lock himself in the bathroom but found there was no lock, the court heard. His stepfather caught up with him in a bedroom and beat him with the leather strap of his belt, the court was told.

A medical examination of the child found old scars and red marks on the boy's hands, chest and limbs, the court heard.

Judge Challinor sentenced the man to two years in prison on Friday. He awarded Ms Knowles £250 from public funds.

Homes site is officially handed over

THE transformation of a former community centre in Wolverhampton is set to move forward after the site was officially handed over to developers.

More than 200 new homes are to be built on the former Jennie Lee Centre site in Wednesfield.

The former council-owned site is to be redeveloped for two, three and four-bedroom homes, including apartments and family housing for sale and rent.

Wolverhampton City Council has handed over the former office and training facility to developer Taylor Wimpey and work will soon start on demolition.

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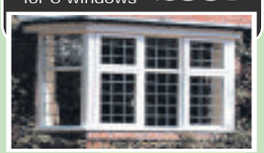

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Help raise standard in schools, says ex-MP

A FORMER MP has criticised a council for 'depleting' its education department and called for a new wave of professionals to be recruited to drive up school standards.

Ken Purchase's intervention comes as figures showed Wolverhampton has the lowest number of good or outstanding primary schools in the country.

Just 56 per cent of children attend a top-rated primary school according to the education watchdog Ofsted.

Prevent

But Mr Purchase, the former Labour MP for Wolverhampton North East, said the cuts in funding would prevent the city council from taking the action it promises.

He also called for education professionals to be recruited by the council to carry out more regular inspections than the ones done by Ofsted every three years.

And he hit out at the cash-strapped authority's decision to put education and regeneration under just one director, Tim Johnson.

Mr Purchase, a governor at Wednesfield High School, spoke out following the remarks of the council's chief executive Simon Warren that he will 'take swift and decisive action to turn around educational standards'.

Golf driving range scheme to boost jobs

A NEW golf driving range will be built in Wednesfield, creating 25 new jobs.

The driving range, shop and cafe are earmarked for a 32-acre site off Neachells Lane.

Consultants are currently speaking to residents about the proposals before formally submitting plans to the city council. The proposal is for land between the Neachells pub and Deansfield Community School.

The driving range, which would be called Wolverhampton Driving Range, has been designed by Sedgley-based Complete Design.

It also includes an aerial ropes challenge and a 30-space car park.

Raids gang jailed after major police hunt

THEY struck at more than a dozen homes, stealing thousands of pounds worth of Volvo cars, tools and jewellery, leading to a police hunt so big that five forces were involved.

But now eight members of the gang behind the raids across the West Midlands, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are behind bars.

Mr Gordon Aspden, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that the gang was the subject of a large scale police investigation involving five separate forces – West Midlands, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. They targeted large properties during the day hoping they were empty, but in one raid threatened a man with a scaffolding pole when confronted.

Offences took place between October 10 and October 18, 2012. The court heard that a Volvo was stolen from a property in Leicester on October 10 and the following day the same car, fitted with false plates, was used in a burglary in Coalway Gardens, Wolverhampton. Later that day they targeted a home on Union Lane in Trysull, where they stole three sets of car keys and attempted to steal a car.

On October 17 the gang burgled a house in Nottingham where they stole part of a special constable's uniform and his warrant card. On October 18 the gang targeted five separate properties, and used the uniform as a disguise.

A house in Malborough Gardens, Tettenhall, was among those targeted along with one in Woodfield Heights, in Tettenhall, and Clark Road, Compton. Mr Aspden said by this point the police had been alerted to some of the early burglaries and were on the lookout for the Volvo. An officer spotted the car but the gang noticed and dumped the car on D'Eyncourt Road, Wednesfield and a number were arrested. He added: "This was a premeditated and persistent campaign of dwelling house burglary by offenders acting together as a gang. It was only brought to an end by their arrest."

Mr Lugard Hurlock, defending, told the court in mitigation that all the offenders are very young. He said: "Great remorse has been shown in relation to this offending, and there has been empathy towards the victims."

Seven of the gang – including a youth and young men aged 19 and 22 with addresses in Nottingham, Rochdale and and Coventry – were locked up for a total of 29 years two months while the case against the final defendant, aged 18, was adjourned to February 17 for psychiatric reports.

Charges for car parking bring in £3m for councils

PARKING charges helped rake in more than £3 million for local authorities across the West Midlands, it has been revealed.

It comes as it emerged parking profits across the country reached a record high in 2012/13.

Three councils in the area are operating their parking at a loss, while the rest all recorded a profit from on and off street parking operations.

Wolverhampton City Council was the top earner in the Black Country, bringing in £930,000 while Dudley Council made £409,000.

In Staffordshire, Lichfield made a £1m profit, Stafford raked in £770,000 and Cannock Chase made £168,000. Wyre Forest brought in £420,000.

Nationally, 52 of the 353 local authorities in England recorded negative numbers, with Walsall and Sandwell among them.

Surplus

Walsall Council lost £286,000 during 2012/13 through parking, South Staffordshire Council made a loss of £82,000 and Sandwell Council lost £17,000.

Leader of Wolverhampton City Council Roger Lawrence said: "We have 33 car parks in Wolverhampton for which we charge for 13 of them. The surplus is to pay for the enforcement and running costs of the other 20.

"The car parks in Wolverhampton are already at capacity so we don't agree with the argument that reducing the cost would see more usage."

The figures have been released by the RAC Foundation.

Business fears as roadworks to resume

JUST months after roadworks ended on a busy shopping street, National Grid have announced they will close the road again.

Back in August work was undertaken to replace gas mains at the junction of Codsall Road and Pendeford Avenue in Claregate, Wolverhampton.

At the time traders said their sales plummeted as customers avoided the area because of the work.

Now engineers will return to complete the scheme on January 6 and close access to Blackburn Avenue for three weeks. They will also set up traffic management system around the island in order to carry out the work.

Businesses fear that once again customers will avoid the area, and they will lose out. Muhammed Bilal, who runs the Murco petrol station on Codsall Road fears the work may take longer than National Grid claims.

He said: "Last time they said the work would take four weeks, but in fact it took two months and it had a massive impact on our business."

Pupils strike right note with judges

SINGING on a stage in front of hundreds of shoppers would be nerve-wracking for most adults, but for 31 schoolchildren it was plain sailing as they cruised to success in a choir competition.

The students aged seven to 11, from Oxley Primary School in Wolverhampton, entered the Little Voices competition at Merry Hill shopping centre in Dudley and won the judges' choice category.

Around 50 schools from the West Midlands were involved in the competition, which saw the pupils from Oxley dress as angels in costumes made by staff member Anna Gorman.

The children won £1,000 and a day of climbing at The Quest Centre.

Geoff Southall, 54, from Perton, pictured above with pupil Eve Bourne, said: "We went with a more traditional feel for the competition and it was absolutely fantastic to see all the kids dressed up in prime position in the shopping centre."

NEWS in brief

Part-worn tyres are sold illegally

A TRADING standards probe has found part-worn tyres being sold illegally, sparking a warning for drivers to beware.

Wolverhampton Trading Standards carried out the investigation, which included a string of test purchases.

All of those bought by officers were incorrectly marked and 33 per cent of the part-worn tyres failed to comply with Government legislation.

Councillor John Reynolds, cabinet member for city services, said: "Unsafe part-worn tyres are a serious danger."

Life saver to go in sports club

A LIFE-SAVING defibrillator will be installed at a sports and social club as part of a pilot scheme.

It will be fitted at Springvale Sports and Social Club in Bilston and will be available to the public in an emergency.

The money was raised by Springvale Steelers FC, Sunday Night Members, Probus, FRAP, Bilston and Willenhall Lions and Springvale Bowling Club along with The Midcounties Co-operative.

Fundraising to the tune of £523

MORE than £500 was raised by a group who sang carols at a Wolverhampton supermarket.

Members of the Penn Fields Church Together group sang songs in Waitrose, Penn Road.

The group comprises members from Lea Road Community Church and The Church of St Chad and St Mark, both Merridale, The Jubilee Christian Centre, Horseley Fields and Beckminster Methodist Church in Penn.

They collected £523 for Little Brothers Of The Good Shepherd.

I do – like the vintage appeal

WOLVERHAMPTON Art Gallery will host its third handmade and vintage wedding fair in March.

Organisers are hoping to build on the success of 2013's event which attracted more than 1,300 visitors from Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas.

It is anticipated that around 40 companies will be present showcasing original products that offer "something different".

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW WITH MARK ANDREWS

SOARING levels of personal debt. Crippling rates of indirect taxation. The fact that children in Vietnam stand a better chance of getting a decent grounding in the three Rs than they do in Britain.

All important issues, you would no doubt agree. But it's good to see that MP Mary Creagh has spotted another major injustice which should be tackled as a matter of urgency.

Thomas the Tank Engine.

Miss Creagh says the lack of female train drivers in Britain is a 'national scandal' and that children's television shows and 'negative stereotypes' were partly to blame.

"In the Thomas the Tank Engine books there are almost no female engines," she says. "The only female characters are an annoyance, a nuisance and in some cases a danger to the functioning of the railway."

Lighten up, love, it's a children's book. Of course, there is no reason at all why women should not become train drivers. They don't require too many map-reading skills, and the reverse parking shouldn't be a problem. That was a joke, by the way.

But seriously, if young girls want to become engine drivers, are they really going to be deterred because it was Edward, not Edwina, who got a new coat of paint?

Given that Miss Creagh seems to have spent quite a bit of time studying the works of Rev Wilbert Awdry, she would no doubt be aware that little is known about the gender of the actual engine drivers. We know Edward's driver, Charlie Sands, is a man, but who is not to say that the company operated a strict equal opportunities policy, with exactly 50 per cent of the drivers being female?

And a committed feminist like Miss Creagh will surely agree with the way the male engines were portrayed as having inherent character flaws. For example, macho Big Gordon was clearly an egomaniac who got his comeuppance when he blew a gasket.

And then there was hypochondriac Henry who was afraid of a few drops of rain.

"It went into a tunnel. And squeaked through its funnel. And never came out again."

Clearly a case of man flu. But he would have fitted in well on today's railways.

JUST a thought about these Boxing Day sales.

On almost every weekday of the year, thousands of the big stores do not open until 9 or even 10 in the morning, when the majority of people are at work.

Then, they shut up shop at 5.30pm, so nobody can do their shopping after work, either.

Then, on one of the few days of the year when most of the population is off work and free to call in at any time, they decide to open up at 6am. Great planning.

Susan Starr's bathroom in the pod due for demolition

Site manager Tony Solway-Blower, next to a pod

The rear of a property with the pod removed

Families upset at loss of pods space

The removal of 'pods' from some homes in Low Hill are meant to be improvements but not all tenants agree

LIKE many others who don't want to send their parents to a care home, Trish Pursall had hoped to have her father move in with her in his old age – but that may no longer be feasible.

She is one of hundreds of Wolverhampton residents whose homes will soon lose valuable living space as part of a multi-million pound council scheme.

Wolverhampton City Council has approved plans to demolish hundreds of extensions on homes where sagging roofs were discovered. Some of the tenants affected have hit out against the scheme, claiming it will cost them space they cannot live without.

After her mother died, Miss Pursall began planning to look after her 80 year old father at her home in First Avenue.

Worried

But since discovering her living room will 'halve' in size under the plans, she is worried she will not have the space.

Mother of two Miss Pursall, aged 43, who works as a general helper at Whitgreave Primary School, said: "With my dad not being in very good heath and my in-laws too, the idea was one could come and live with me. If they take away that part of my living room I can't. It is going to go from about 28 ft to about 12 ft.

"I am extremely angry," she added. "I'm not saying no to any work. They just don't discuss things with you and then you find out. The lack of communication is astounding."

During the 1970s and 1980s, 380 homes in Low Hill were fitted with extensions – known as pods – many of which are now crumbling.

Wolverhampton City Council is carrying out repairs to its 260 affected properties, working with its housing company, Wolverhampton Homes.

Susan Starr and Trish Pursall in Old Fallings Crescent, Low Hill

At first, the structures were to be torn down and rebuilt, but the council has now decided the functions once served by the pods should be moved into the main bodies of the homes.

Miss Pursall is not the only one to have hit out against the idea. Maureen Ratcliffe, a member of a steering group looking into the pods, said it meant families would lose living space they desperately needed.

Ms Ratcliffe, aged 62, who has raised two generations of children in her home of 35 years in Goodyear Avenue, said: "It is mainly going to affect the elderly and the infirm, but it will also affect families.

"Earlier we were told the cost of the scheme would be £20 million. The council have had that money given to them. Now they say it is going to cost £15 million as if that's great news. Why can't they spend some of the savings rebuilding the single-storey pods?"

Council bosses say replacing the pods would not only be more costly but would also be disruptive to residents.

Council spokesman Gurdip Thandi said: "Carrying out the work would have taken several months and would have required tenants to move out of their homes.

"This could have been quite a distressing prospect for housebound tenants or those with children."

The city council has completed three show homes to give affected residents an idea of how the changes will look.

Mr Thandi said: "The show homes we're consulting tenants on now are a much more practical and affordable option."

He said 78 per cent of affected householders have now viewed the properties, with around three quarters of those happy with the improvement plans.

He added: "Of those remaining, officers will discuss with each resident any minor variations to the works that will be necessary to suit individual family needs/circumstances/health issues.

"At present, there are 47 residents who have viewed the show homes and are unhappy with the changes and officers will continue to work with these residents to find a suitable solution."

Issues

But Marleen Lambeth, aged 63, also a member of the steering group and who has lived on Fourth Avenue for 40 years, said the consultation process had been inadequate, with residents' opinions being gathered during the viewing process, which ran until November 19, while the project was approved at a meeting on October 23.

She said: "Where is the consultation in that? It is all sealed and delivered. It's like they don't care."

Mr Thandi said: "As far as complaints are concerned, we have not received any formal complaints from tenants. However, it's fair to say during the many months of consultation with tenants, a number of issues have been raised with officers which we've been at pains to address.

"We continue to work with residents to find solutions to the individual issues which households raise during the consultation process, and to reiterate the need for the works to take place to ensure that homes meet modern standards of warmth, security and stability for the future."

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

SHOPS were evacuated, traffic halted and Army bomb experts called in after officers became suspicious about an illegally parked car in Wolverhampton. A young motorist from Bolton had parked his Triumph 1500 outside the RAF and Royal Navy recruiting offices in Bell Street.

A LEADING Midland department store was reopening after a major revamp, immediately after the Christmas sales frenzy. Crossroads star Jane Rossington was joined by Mayor of Dudley Councillor David Caunt for the reopening of Cooks of Dudley.

THE personal hi-fi craze was putting the hearing of thousands of young people at risk, warned four leading organisations for the deaf. The Association for the Hard of Hearing, the British Deaf Association, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and the National Deaf Children's Society said loud disco music and home headsets were also a threat to hearing.

1993...

A PRISONER who resembled 'something out of Star Wars' after being encased from the waste up in bandages went missing from a hospital in Evesham after being treated for a spinal injury. But a search was called off when the man arrived back at Long Lartin jail near Evesham before the officers escorting him. His mother said he had misunderstood the arrangements and made his own way back.

THERE was little festive cheer in Bosnia, with a ceasefire agreed the previous week by the warring Croats, Serbs and Muslims being ignored as fighting continued.

Meanwhile, the IRA defiantly said it would continue its terror attacks in an unrepentant end-of-year message.

2003...

BOB Monkhouse died aged 75, following a two-and-a-half-year battle with prostate cancer. It was the ATV series The Golden Shot in 1967 which truly established him as the king of the television gameshow.

EXPLOSIONS that could be heard for miles around rocked the Black Country when six oxygen tanks exploded in a van parked outside a pub. The van, which had been stolen from a pharmaceutical firm in Tamworth, had been set alight at 11.30pm after it was parked outside the Horse and Jockey pub in Bilston. Windows at the pub and a nearby amusement arcade were shattered.

AVERAGE house prices in West Bromwich had risen by 15 per cent over the previous 12 months, putting it seventh in a national table of property 'hotspots'.

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We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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NEWS

Ripples of hope for the future of Central Baths

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save Wolverhampton's under-fire Central Baths welcomed news that the city council has called in two leading sports organisations to boost its fortunes.

The baths have been threatened with closure as the city council looks to make cuts of £98 million over the next five years and thousands of people have signed a petition calling for the facility to be saved.

But ways to increase visitors to the site have already been suggested by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Sport England. Both organisations have also been involved in drawing up a new business plan for the centre.

A new senior management team has also been put in place to run the city's leisure centres as commercial enterprises.

Leading

Commercial managers from the council have also met with the people leading the campaign to keep Central Baths open.

Other towns and cities are also being visited by officials to see what lessons can be learnt to improve what is on offer at Central Baths. Carol Bailey, who is a regular user of Central Baths and is leading the campaign to keep them open, was one of the people who met with the council. She said: "The petitioners are very encouraged by the obvious commitment – in both time and resources – of senior council staff, and the very active participation and expertise of the ASA in helping frame a business plan to save the baths."

Wolverhampton City Council has said it is 'committed to trying to find a solution'. Elias Mattu, leisure boss, added: "We are delighted to be working with two respected organisations like the ASA and Sport England to assist us in our aim of making Central Baths a thriving facility."

He said Government cuts mean the city council is being forced to cut services.

Central Baths currently receives a £316,000 subsidy from the city council.

Firm is forging ahead

Geoff Howles, Ruth Murday, Terry Hitchen, Jeremy Jones and Geoff Radford

ONE of the Black Country's oldest-established steel forging businesses is under new ownership following a takeover by its management.

Victoria Drop Forgings, Wednesfield Road, Willenhall has been bought by Geoff Howles and Geoff Radford who purchased the shares from the previous owner Jeremy Jones for an undisclosed sum.

The company has been under family ownership for more than a century, and the new owners promise a fresh era of growth.

Established in 1910, Victoria Drop Forgings has been supplying the aircraft industry since the 1930s and provides aerospace components and fittings including the fuel line connector.

The company also manufactures a variety of drop forgings for the engineering industries. Owner Geoff Radford has spent his career in the forging and fabrications industry and recently returned to the UK after a spell running an overseas engineering group.

He said as well as expanding on the company's established reputation, they were looking to acquire another complementary brass/aluminium press forging business which would be integrated into Victoria Drop Forgings in early 2014.

"We are a very traditional, old family firm operating in a niche market within the aircraft industry which is predicted to grow by five per cent a year over the next 20 years," he said.

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LETTERS

Another colossal waste of money

PLANS for the creation of a community hub at the old Parkfield High School have been thrown into doubt after numerous additional areas of work have come to light.

Already the Labour-run Wolverhampton City Council has spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on moving the Educational Library Service and Pupil Referral Units into the building, which until recently saw it being home to the South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy.

This comes after months of public consultations held across the city, in which the council decided to do away with Springvale Library and remove all council-run services from the ward of Springvale, despite strong opposition.

A review is currently taking place to see whether the additional costs for the unplanned work will be value for money. All options are currently being looked at, which could include the whole site being sold off.

The Liberal Democrat councillors and campaigners in Springvale are not surprised by yet another potentially colossal waste of tax payers money by this council.

TOM STOKES
Wolverhampton

Parkfield is just a fiasco

IT would be almost laughable, were it not so worrying in the present economic climate. Plans to convert the former Parkfield High School are in 'tatters' because of 'significant problems' with the building.

For months work has been carried out on this site, extending, expanding, refurbishing, call it what you will, to what end? Possible demolition?

Is there anyone honest enough (or brave enough) on our council to inform the general public the total cost of this fiasco?

No worries though, some revenue can be recouped by cutting services for the elderly and the disabled.

V JONES
Ettingshall Park

Problem of too many assistants in teaching

I RECOMMEND that those responsible for leading an investigation into the very low standards of education in some of our primary schools consider the following points.

Since schools became responsible for control of their own budgets there has been a creeping increase in the use of teaching assistants.

Employment of these untrained people, offers heads the temptation to economize and save at a time of austerity instead of employing fully trained and qualified school teachers.

However it must be said that some TAs do a very useful job in schools especially where the first language of the pupils is anything other than English and the class teacher cannot verbally communicate, in particular with the primary intake.

Each failing school should be investigated for a possible excessive use of TAs.

R HAZLEHURST
Wolverhampton

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
Wolverhampton Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
wolchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Baths makes a valuable contribution to the city

NEWSPAPER articles have created the totally wrong impression of the Central Baths. For more than 150 years there has been a swimming pool or public baths in Bath Avenue, not a leisure centre, a pure swimming facility.

Wolverhampton SwimmingClub formed in 1876 (138 years) one of the oldest sporting clubs in the city has been based in the same facility. The new Central Baths was built to cater for competitive swimming, eight lanes, 25 metres, electronic timing and 400 seats for spectators.

The then chairman of Leisure Fred Leadsome had a vision that the best competitive swimmers would come to Wolverhampton and we have, to some extent, achieved that.

The opening gala in 1990 was a Great Britain International Match, since then we have staged the Speedo Grand Prix, the English Schools, district, regional and many intercounty events including special and paralympic championships.

The other factor not mentioned is the visitor contribution not only to the facility but the tourist contribution when visiting competitors and their families eat in local restaurants and stay in hotels.

The most valued contribution to the community of Wolverhampton is a healthy lifestyle where children are taught to swim, surely one of the most valuable contibutions to a child's life and also many adults have taken advantage and learnt to swim.

Whitmore Reans must not be denied the loss of another facility that the community deserve, we lost Compton Park, this was a perfect example of a disastrous decision and the loss to the community was immeasurable. To compare Central Baths with Aldersley Leisure Village, Bentley Bridge and Bilston is totally wrong, these sites are multi-purpose sports centres.

The Amateur Swimming Association and Sport England are active in talks with the Local Authority, we can only hope that a solution may be found, especially if the ward councillors will add their support.

PETER W HOLMES MBE
Chairman Sports Advisory Council

BRIDGE CORNER

DELICACY is sometimes required with even the most imposing of hands.

More than one Declarer went wrong on this week's deal, failing to bring home the small slam despite missing just five points between the two hands.

South opened Two Clubs, to show eight playing tricks in an undisclosed suit or a flat hand with 23/24 points.

The Two Diamonds from North asked South to bid his suit; South's Two No Trumps showed a flat hand. N orth then went to Six.

It is generally accepted that bidding Six No Trumps is the right call with 33 points – occasionally ace and king of a suit are with the defender on lead, but the chances are minimal.

West led the 10 of clubs and Declarer could see 11 top tricks. All depended on finessing the jack of spades or the diamond suit. Most pairs started with diamonds, since the suit potentially offered four tricks. Some led the queen and it mattered not if the king was held up for a round or taken immediately by the ace. When the diamonds did not split three/three, Declarer tried the spade finesse and went one down.

Other declarers played low from hand and inserted the 10. They then returned to hand with a heart and led a second low diamond, intending to play the jack. But the king popped up and was taken by the ace.

This line succeeds whenever the king is with West and he holds no more than three of the suit. *– Bill*

North: ♠ K52 ♥ K108 ♦ AJ103 ♣ J52

West: ♠ Q1094 ♥ 974 ♦ K7 ♣ 10986

East: ♠ 87 ♥ 6532 ♦ 9852 ♣ 743

South: ♠ AJ63 ♥ AQJ ♦ Q64 ♣ AKQ

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S	W	N	E
2C	P	2D	P
2NT	P	6NT	P
P	P		

Ban on right turn should be dropped

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But for the past 20 years or so I have been totally frustrated by the inability to turn right onto Perton from Pattingham Road and when exiting Perton being unable to turn into the road where I live and pay council tax.

So many motorists turn both ways illegally but I as a law-abiding citizen do not but travel an extra three mile or so.

I don't feel it is fair that due to some old existing highway ruling my fuel cost over the year increase significantly.

Could we not allow residents to turn to get to and from their home?

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NEWS

People to have a say on £14m cuts to transport

Intents operation at V

Rotary members collecting tents, after V Festival, to help disaster areas

THEY once gave shelter to music fans at one of the country's biggest musical festivals.

But now, 7,000 miles from the fields of Staffordshire's Weston Park, thousands of tents are being used to house families left homeless by the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Each year Rotary clubs from across the Black Country, Staffordshire and Shropshire descend when the V Festival is over to collect the thousands of tents, sleeping bags, and carrymats left.

The huge operation involves scores of volunteers from Rotary, Lions clubs, Masons, and air cadets.

The mountain of items are then checked over and stored ready to be dispatched to natural disaster and humanitarian crisis zones across the globe. More than 100,000 homes have been destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan and there are more than 11 million people affected by the devastating events, according to the UN.

Some towns and cities have virtually been wiped out.

Peter Barke, press officer for the Rotary Club of Cannock, said: "Thanks to the people who left the equipment behind and the Rotary members who gave up their time to collect them, there are people affected by the disaster who now have a temporary home.

"These unwanted tents which would have gone to landfill have now been shipped to the Philippines to give much needed shelter.

"This sort of thing really can save lives and a tremendous amount of hard work goes into collecting the equipment and then getting it ready to send out."

BUS, tram and rail passengers are being urged to have their say over plans to make £14 million transport budget cuts over the next two years.

Centro, the West Midlands' transport authority, has been tasked by the seven local authorities that fund it with making the savings, which equate to 10 per cent of its total budget.

The group's chairman Councillor John McNicholas and staff have been at West Bromwich bus station to talk to the public about the proposals and answer questions, and are planning more events soon.

Councillor McNicholas said: "If proposed cuts to our budget go through we are facing difficult choices.

Important

"The free bus pass for eligible people is funded by Government and will remain in place, but it is hugely important that the public give us their views in the consultation about where they think savings should be made," added Councillor McNicholas.

Options which help to save money include children paying two thirds of the adult fare on buses instead of half; reducing the grant to Ring and Ride; cutting the number of taxpayer-funded bus services and removing the locally funded 'add on' which allows eligible people to travel free after 11pm.

A second public event will be held in Queen Square, Wolverhampton, on January 11 between 9am and 3pm, and a third on January 18 in Park Street, Walsall. Views can be made by visiting the events, by emailing budgetviews@centro.org.uk, or by writing to Budget Views, Centro House, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD.

You can also complete an online questionnaire at www.centro.org.uk/budgetconsultation.

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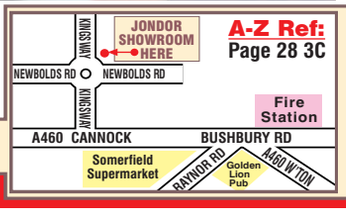

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NEWS

Hitting new heights

Dominic Vincent and George Morris at Wolf Mountain

CLIMBING champions are reaching new heights after winning two titles at a national competition, which will see them progress to European youth contests.

George Morris, aged 14, and Dominic Vincent, 13, won separate titles at the British Climbing Championships in Sheffield. The pair competed in the under-16 category, which saw them pitted against 40 other youngsters from across the country. When not competing, they train at the Wolverhampton-based Wolf Mountain Climbing Centre.

George, a student at Codsall High School, won the British Bouldering section, and Dominic, who attends St Peter's School, won the Lead Championship.

Achievement

The teenagers have now been selected to represent Britain at the European Youth Cups and will soon be travelling to, among other places, Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, to compete.

Julian Porter, co-owner of Wolf Mountain, said: "It's quite an achievement to do so well. We are really pleased that George and Dominic will be able to serve as role models for the younger climbers."

The self-funded pair are looking for sponsorship. Anyone interested in helping the climbers with sponsorship should contact the centre directly on 01902 711186.

False name taxi driver jailed for speeding

A TAXI driver who on eight separate occasions told police another man was driving his car when he was caught speeding has been jailed.

by Naomi Dunning

Gulistan Khan gave police the name of a fictitious man and a fake address when he responded to eight speeding notices sent to him between July 2010 and September 2012, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Ms Sati Ruck, prosecuting, told the court that Khan was caught out when he was sent a speeding notice for an offence committed on February 16.

She said: "He returned the notification saying a Mr Fakeer Singh was the driver.

Fictitious

It was discovered that the defendant received speeding notification of eight other occasions and each time he had said he was not the driver."

She said the police started to look into these cases, and discovered on seven of the occasions the 43-year-old father had said the driver was a Fakeer Singh and on the eighth he said a Tony Singh was the driver.

Ms Ruck told the court these were fictitious people, and he had given false addresses for them.

She said he had mostly been caught speeding on the Wolverhampton Road and Birmingham Road in Wolverhampton.

He was arrested and interviewed and said that he had made a mistake when filling out the notification on the February 16 offence. When asked about the other offences he said no comment.

Khan, of Gorsebrook Road, Wolverhampton pleaded guilty to perverting the course of justice.

Mr Ekwal Tiwana, defending, told the court that this was an act of 'stupidity' by the defendant.

Judge Mr Michael Dudley jailed Khan for two months.

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NEWS

NHS shake-up could cost millions over equal pay

THE biggest shake-up of the NHS in decades could leave councils exposed to even more equal pay claims, which have already cost tens of millions of pounds.

Authorities are working to find out if they could be asked to cover back pay for hundreds of public health staff who transferred to them when Primary Care Trusts were abolished in April.

Councils have had to pay out tens of millions of pounds to deal with equal pay. The payouts relate to low-paid women, such as cleaners, who received about £10,000 a year less than men doing equivalent jobs.

The claims are for back pay. In Dudley, officers say equal pay is a changing area of the law and the council is monitoring the situation for its staff, which includes 93 employees who transferred from the NHS.

The authority has already spent £50 million to date settling claims. Bosses said they could not speculate on any extra bill from former NHS workers' claims.

Considered

Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "We had already considered the potential for equal pay claims before public health came over to the local authority. However, equal pay is a changing area of law, and the council is continuing to monitor the situation across all areas of the authority."

Sandwell Council's costs for equal pay claims could rise beyond £36m, according to a report last year. In April, 46 former PCT staff transferred to the borough council. Its finance chief Councillor Steve Eling said a consultation is taking place on a proposed restructure of public health which could better incorporate workers into the council and end any imbalance in pay.

In Staffordshire, a further 29 ex-public health workers moved over to the county council. The authority was unavailable for comment on the potential for further equal pay claims. Wolverhampton City Council have already paid out £33m to settle claims in 2008.

Students in cash drive

Students at Wolverhampton College offered winter car checks to raise cash for Compton Hospice. Back left,Conner Mills, Troy Green, Andrew McShane and front, Rachel Faulkner and Devon Smith

MOTORING students completed winter car checks for tutors in exchange for donations to charity.

Forty of them took part in the fundraising drive at the City of Wolverhampton College on Thursday and Friday.

The students, who are studying for their Level two and three qualifications carried out tests to make sure cars are prepared for plummeting temperatures, including checking tyres and wiper blades, anti-freeze and fluid levels.

They also valeted staff cars at the Paget Road campus. All money raised from the venture will go towards Compton Hospice.

Principal Mark Robertson was among those putting his car in for the service, and said it was a great opportunity to put the skills they are learning into practice.

"The college is committed to ensuring our students gain not only recognised qualifications but the skills and knowledge they need to work," he said.

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MEMORY LANE

Brierley Hill Alliance FC in 1964, before they joined forces with Oldswinford FC

Spring Meadow Cricket Club, gated off and neglected

Dudley Town FC, seen in 1985 at Dudley Sports Centre, where Castlegate is now

Wollaston Vics FC in 1950/1951 show off a cup they won

Brierley Hill Alliance FC, now home to an Asda store

Terry achieves his goal to recall memories of forgotten fields

by Andrew Turton

THOUSANDS play out their fantasies of scoring the winning goal in the cup final or bowling out the Aussies to win the Ashes.

And while the windswept fields and grounds where they dare to dream may be more modest than Wembley or Lords cricket ground, they still hold a special place in the hearts of those players.

Many works teams had their own ground while amateur clubs often had half a dozen sides playing matches at humble sporting arenas. As industry dwindled in the Black Country, many of those beloved grounds were sold off to become supermarkets, housing estates and shops.

Now one former player has revisited his old haunts to revive forgotten fields.

Terry Church, aged 71, has compiled a new book to rediscover many old pitches and grounds.

While many grounds were little more than park pitches, others were neat little stadiums. Mr Church, who lives in Wall Heath, was a keen sportsman who played on grounds across the Black Country for more than 20 years.

"It has been a labour of love for me. I played for one or two of the clubs over the years. You would go to work on a Saturday morning then go out to play football or cricket in the afternoon. It was a big part of working life."

Mr Church believes more than 100 football and cricket grounds have disappeared in the south of the Black Country alone. One of his fondest memories is the old Dudley Sports Centre and County Ground, where the Castlegate Business Park now stands off Birmingham Road and Tipton Road.

It was once home to Dudley Town Football Club and Dudley Cricket Club, and Worcestershire County Cricket Club would also play at least one championship or one-day match a season on the cricket ground.

But after part of the land collapsed in 1985 due to the underground mines the site was condemned and eventually redeveloped. Other notable football grounds inclu-ded the Round Oak Steelworks ground, known as The Earls, off John Street and Pensnett Road, in Brierley Hill. It hosted many Birmingham Works League games through the 60s and 70s before the famous old steelworks closed in the 1980s. The ground had been used by Dudley Town but it was eventually sold off to be redeveloped as the David Lloyd Leisure Centre.

Nearby Brierley Hill Alliance had played at the Cottage Street ground but this was sold to Asda. Oldswinford FC had played on pitches at South Road, Norton, and had been a successful side.

Some grounds remain as they were but stand neglected. Spring Meadow Cricket Club, founded in 1929, had been based in Spring Meadow itself before moving to Saltwells Road, Dudley Wood, and then finally to Garratts Lane, Old Hill. The club folded in 2006.

● Copies of Lost Cricket and Football Clubs and Grounds of the South of the Black Country can be bought at **www.wallheath.org.uk** or from Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford. Mr Church can be contacted on 01384 292170 or terry church@btclick.com

Terry Church at Stourbridge Cricket Club

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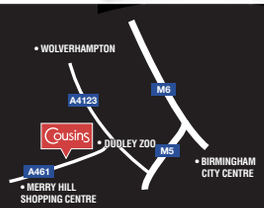

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NEWS

Why busy nursery is in the pink

Colourful scenes – grower Rowland Hodges at the Hodges Nursery, Lower Penn in Wolverhampton

TRANSFORMED into a sea of pink as far as the eye can see – this greenhouse is fit to bursting with colour.

A nursery in Wolverhampton grew thousands of beautiful flowers ready for the festive season – one of its busiest times of the year.

Months of hard work goes into growing around 7,000 plants at Hodges Nurseries, in Lower Penn and the 100ft greenhouse was packed full to the brim.

Owner Rowland Hodges , who has run the business for 42 years, said planting of the cyclamen began in the summer.

"We start selling them from September onwards but they don't all flower at the same time. "December is the busiest time for us though."

Mr Hodges said that originally, 7,000 cyclamen plants had been potted and 4,000 have been sold to wholesale and retail trade.

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Treasure trove funded by crime auctioned for £200k

THE ill-gotten gains of a convicted conman raised around £200,000 when they went under the hammer at an auction.

The treasure trove of luxuries – including Muhammed Ali's boxing shorts and Wayne Rooney's football boots – once belonged to Thomas 'Tommy' Scragg.

He is currently in jail following three separate convictions. The collection of goods – worth a total of £675,000 - was funded by a life of crime.

Around 400 people flocked to an auction of the goods at Wilson Auctions in Northern Ireland and a further 917 bids were made online.

Among the items to be sold was a framed picture of George Best and a copy of his birth certificate, which fetched £125.

A framed England shirt signed by 13 players netted £600 and a Carlos Tevez signed boot in a perspex case brought in £1,000. A signed Maradonna shirt fetched £1,800, while a pair of Ali's shorts brought in £2,500.

Items of jewellery also amassed by Scragg went under the hammer and brought in some of the higher amounts. A man's Cartier watch was sold for £9,000, while a ladies Cartier watch with a diamond set bracelet brought in £12,000.

The highest lot of the day was a David Morris 18 carat white gold diamond set of necklace, bracelet and earrings which sold for £28,000.

Uncovered

Money raised will now go back into the public purse.

Scragg, aged 57, of Solihull, was jailed for 17 years in 2012 for his involvement in a tax fraud. He was often seen as a friend of the stars and was pictured alongside some of his sporting heroes.

The luxury items were seized from Scragg's country house in 2008 during a raid by police.

Scragg's Wolverhampton-based company Moya Payroll managed staff wages for several construction industry companies but he used the firm as a front to steal more than £26 million in tax.

Another investigation by West Midlands Police uncovered a further £8m of stolen PAYE tax.

Officers from the force's Regional Asset Recovery Team – RART – used the Proceeds of Crime Act to sell Scragg's collection and put the money back into the public purse.

Tinsley, from the RART, said: "It's our job to ensure Scragg never gets to reap the rewards of ripping off the taxpayer."

A signed Maradona shirt was also being sold

A diamond-encrusted Rolex was found

DC Derek Tinsley with some of the items that were auctioned

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After six year they had grown sufficiently to expand further and relocate to the premises now in Essington where they have three industrial units at present and will be taking occupancy of a further unit in January 2014. The company turns out more than over 200 double-glazed units a day along with numerous uPVC window frames,doors and conservatories a day.

They believe that over the years they have identified what the customer wants and feel that they offer a high level of customer service including a 'no deposit' offer and no pressure salesmen.

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The company has several fitting teams who have also been in the industry for many years with a high level of experience.

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They offer a vast range of bevelled and coloured designs to be incorporated into either windows, doors or conservatories. They are FENSA registered and a member of the UK trades confederation quality assured. All glazed units come with a CE mark .

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FENSA

Colin Penny and Alec Brew from the Staffordshire Aircraft Restoration Team with plans for the former depot

Goods depot on track to be heritage centre

AN historic former railway goods station will be transformed into a transport heritage centre, under plans now unveiled.

Aircraft would be restored and go on display at the proposed heritage centre in Wolverhampton.

The group behind the proposal, Staffordshire Aircraft Restoration Team, said it would be Wolverhampton's only industrial museum. Alec Brew, chairman of the group, said: "There isn't anything like an industrial museum in Wolverhampton.

Willenhall has got its lock museum, Dudley has the Living Museum and Walsall has its leather museum. Wolverhampton currently does not have anything like this."

The group has been searching for a place to set up a heritage centre since it first former in 2006. It has already acquired the lease for the building from Wolverhampton City Council and, if permission is granted, will carry out a restoration of the building.

It is hoped the heritage centre will showcase the work of the group as it restores aircraft. It will also showcase Wolverhampton's rich aerospace history. The city was once at the forefront of the industry thanks to the historic Boulton Paul company.

Mr Brew said: "We had been looking for a place to create a permanent heritage centre since we formed in 2006. We have already been granted the lease for the former goods depot at Tettenhall station, which was part of the Smestow Valley line."

Significance

The group also hopes the building itself will become an attraction.

"The building itself has significance because it was the only Great Western Railway station built in the grounds of Wolverhampton," he added. "We will restore the whole building. The roof needs fixing and it has to be restored as part of the lease and we have to restore it exactly as it was, in the Great Western Railway colours. The building itself will be an attraction."

Mr Brew said restoration work was likely to run into thousands of pounds but the group would apply for lottery funding. The heritage centre would be run by volunteers as a charitable trust and would be open to the public.

The group has around 24 members and will hold a recruitment day to try to attract more.

Meadowbank Terrace, a quiet cul-de-sac, faces the surviving buildings of the old Tettenhall Station including the goods depot which could become the heritage centre.

Two hundred years ago the road in front of Meadowview Terrace was the main London to Holyhead road. Adjacent to the terrace, in 1792, it crossed the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the first East West bulk transport link.

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Villagers in £350,000 bid to buy their local

VILLAGERS are being called on to help save their local pub – by backing a £350,000 bid to buy it. The Crown in Codsall is being put up for sale by its parent company, Marston's.

A group of local residents have established the Codsall Wood Pub Company Ltd, through which they hope to buy the business, rather than let it be sold to developers.

The company directors are asking others to each invest a minimum of £500 to put towards their bid.

Director Hugh Clark, who is also chairman of the Codsall Wood Show and Village Committee, said: "Historically, we were a place with many pubs and ale houses.

Community

"At one point there were eight pubs and ale houses in Codsall Wood that provided refreshment for the residents and visitors. Just over a year ago, we had the great misfortune of losing the Cross Guns pub.

"We don't want the same thing to happen to The Crown."

Mr Clark, aged 65, of Whitehouse Lane, Codsall, added: "It is really the last amenity. We have got a small church and a church hall, but aside from that we don't really have any community amenity."

Last month, plans to build 10 houses on the site of the former Cross Guns pub, in Wood Road, were approved.

The Codsall Wood Pub Company Ltd needs now to raise around £350,000 to stop The Crown, in Wood Road, from potentially meeting the same fate and is inviting anyone who wants to get involved, including people outside Codsall, to buy shares at £1 each. Already they have registered the pub as a community asset under the Localism Act, allowing them to bid for it when it is put on the market.

Plea – the Crown pub

Danny Bowles, spokesman for Marston's, said: "The Crown is a pub that is due to be disposed of and will be marketed shortly.

"We are aware the local community have listed it as a community asset and as such have a period of time in which to raise funds and make an offer for our consideration."

Anyone who is interested should email **Enquiries@thecodsallwoodpubcom pany.co.uk**

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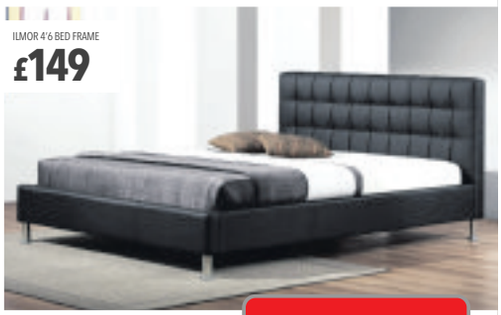

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CLUB NEWS

Six lucky winners in free raffle

K'FORD TG

KINGSWINFORD Guild did not meet in the Community centre in December. Instead they visited The Lodge in Dudley and enjoyed a lavish Christmas Luncheon.

There was no formal business, but members were reminded of two national events, in April and in June which may appeal to them.

A box was circulated, so that members who wished to do so could make a charity donation instead of sending cards.

However, some people did distribute cards.

There was a free raffle and the six prize winners were Ena Baker, Enid Fennell, Ann Rogers, Kath Turner, Margaret Farmer and Sylvia Taylor.

Tribute to sum raised

K'FORD POPPY APPEAL

ORGANISERS of the Kingswinford Poppy Appeal have thanked the public for their generosity after £35,489.34 was raised.

Organiser Bob Townsend paid tribute to those who had given their time and money to the cause.

He also thanked the participants in the annual sponsored Poppy Walk, whose ages ranged from three years old to some who were in their 70s.

Speaker brings the spirit of Christmas

Guest speaker Patricia Boyd and President Parkash at the December meeting

WOLVERHAMPTON SOROPTIMISTS

TWO guests attending the December meeting were welcomed by president Parkash.

Speaker was Patricia Boyd, who brought the spirit of Christmas past and present alive with an entertaining talk interspersed with poems, facts and verse from Victorian Christmas times to the present day.

The vote of thanks was given by Audrey Coates.

This was followed by members donating food and miscellaneous items for The Well – Wolverhampton's Food Bank.

Participation began in October 2012, when it was agreed that the club would support by collecting food and delivering to the warehouse. To now, some 455kg of food and items has been given as a way of providing supplies to local people in need.

For many years at Christmas, the club has collected for The Church of the Good Shepherd Trust who this year had requested ring can pull-food items and men's clothing, particularly underwear.

Coupled with the above, presents are always collected for The Haven Charity to enable children and parents to enjoy a safer Christmas.

Hidden talents discovered

PERTON JUBILEE TWG

AT the November meeting the club staged a craft evening with members participating in making Christmas cards and boxes, when hidden talents came to light.

The December meeting was the guild's Christmas Party with members bringing scrumptious food for a festive buffet which was enjoyed by all. Everyone went home with a little Christmas gift.

At the end of the week members attended the Federation Carol Service at St John's Church in the Square to round off a very eventful time.

The national Carol Service in Coventry Cathedral followed, attended by when 12 members of the Perton guild.

FOCUS ON TETTENHALL

Enjoying a drink at the Micropub: Hail to the Ale

Hail to the Ale run by Angela and Gary Morton from Coven

All quiet but micro pub has maxi appeal

NO televisions, games machines or loud, blaring music, and hot food is certainly off the menu.

Micro pubs are a very different breed to traditional watering holes.

They pride themselves on offering locally-brewed real ales and fruity ciders, all in the confines of a single room. And the concept of sipping on pints and rubbing shoulders with the same old faces in the cosy setting of what feels like a front room is growing in popularity up and down the country.

In the past four years, around 40 micro pubs have flung open their doors to drinkers. Twenty-four have opened in the past 12 months alone.

The first micro pub to open in the West Midlands was Hail to the Ale in Pendeford Avenue, Aldersley, near Tettenahll last year. It was the 32nd to open in the country.

In its first few months the pub has gone down a storm in the local area, according to owner Gary Morton, aged 53, who runs it with his wife Angela, 50.

The pair founded the Essington-based Morton Brewery six years ago.

Mr Morton said: "Micro pubs are a stripped down version of ordinary pubs. It has been going excellently since we opened.

Nostalgic

"We opened our doors quietly on a Thursday evening. Within half an hour, all the tables and chairs were taken.

"The three weekends that followed, we were absolutely packed. People in the area felt something like this was needed. It's comfortable and nostalgic for people. It's a completely different concept.

"There will be a couple of thousand more micro pubs opening in the UK in the next few years."

Forget the soggy, tasteless chips served up in some pubs, Hail to the Ale dishes up traditional pub nibbles such as pork scratchings, pickled onions, pickled eggs and hand raised pies. And there isn't any cheap looking alcohol in sight or any spirits.

Mr Morton continued: "Ordinary pubs try to do too much. They try to cater for too many people and end up not appealing to anyone.

"We came up with the idea to open a micro pub in March this year. We'd seen a feature on micro-pubs on TV and thought it was perfect for us.

"We have a good group of regulars. But we are also seeing new faces coming in. Seems as if there are still people just finding out about us.

"We appeal to middle aged to elderly people. But we've still had to ask for ID from time to time from some younger drinkers."

The first micro pub ever to open was the Butchers Arms, in Herne, Kent in 2005 and that was followed by a flurry from 2009 until this year.

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Fizzogs' film date with fun

The Usual Suspects become The Unusual Suspects in the Fizzogs calendar

In Thelma & Louise 2, Mags and Barb escape to the bright lights of Blackpool

THEY'RE the Black Country theatre group with a difference. And after a cheeky spoof calendar proved such a hit this year, the Fizzogs have done it again.

The 2014 calendar provides a humorous and uniquely Black Country slant on popular films.

So Pretty Woman becomes Pretty Wench, Trainspotting is Tramspotting, The Usual Suspects changes to The Unusual Suspects and Thelma and Louise 2 involves a jaunt to Blackpool.

The popular Fizzog trio – Deb Nicholls, Sue Hawkins, and Jacky Fellows, from Stourbridge, Wordsley and Wombourne respectively – donned wacky outfits for the calendar, as well as stripping off for a couple of risqué poses.

Demand

In one, entitled American Beauties, their modesty is protected merely by cabbage leaves, rather than rose petals like in the Oscar-winning American Beauty.

The girls show their darker side with a spoof of Psycho, featuring characters Stella, Manda and Kaz 'as their lovable selves'.

For Tramspotting they rope in a couple of friends for the classic Trainspotting film cover shot, all donning school uniforms with the tagline 'choose Barbie, choose Peppa Pig, choose Chocomilk, choose Nintendo, choose sweets'. And in The Unusual Suspects, which includes the tagline 'four women, one line-up, incontinent'. the girls dress as elderly women for a mean and moody pose. This year's calendar was so popular that it sold out and the group were still getting requests for copies in February.

Fizzog Sue said: "The calendar proved very popular a year ago and it soon sold out. We had to have reprint and it was still in demand in February. We are all big movie fans and the ideas for pictures came thick and fast. Some of them are a bit risqué but I'm sure people will find them great fun."

The Fizzogs, who all met at college, are also embarking on their latest pantomime tour early next year. It is entitled A Black Country Fairytale, Ay it! and combines the stories of Red Riding Hood, Snow White and the Three Dwarves and Cinderella.

The Fizzogs have developed a wide fan base across the Midlands and have their own Saturday show on Black Country Community Radio. The panto starts at Netherton Arts Centre on January 11 and continues at venues throughout the Midlands.

Earlier this year the popular group embarked on a seven-date Midlands tour with their show, 50 Per Cent Funnier. For details visit **www.fizzogproductions.co.uk** or email fizzog@thorns-s.dudley.sch.uk

A distinctly Black Country take on Pretty Woman

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NEWS

Dealers in scrap 'are cashing in on loophole'

SCRAP metal dealers are taking advantage of a loophole in new laws by cashing in cheques on their premises.

by Adam Thompson

South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson has written to the Government calling for an investigation.

In October the Government brought in a law that prevented scrap metal dealers accepting cash for metal.

It was introduced in a bid to put a stop criminal trade by forcing dealers to pay suppliers electronically or by cheque.

Concern

The measures were designed to keep an accurate record of transactions.But less than two months after the law was introduced some dealers are offering to cash cheques on their premises.

Gavin Williamson, MP for South Staffordshire, has written to the Minister of State for Crime Prevention, Norman Baker MP, to request the matter be investigated and that measures are put in place to protect the system from further exploitation.

He said: "This is obviously of deep concern.

"Metal theft does a huge amount of damage to local communities – from disrupted rail services to desecrated war memorials and damaged church roofs – and costs the national economy £220 million a year.

"I will continue to campaign in Parliament to ensure that this serious issue is addressed and that unscrupulous operators are appropriately punished."

Under the Scrap Metal Dealer Act 2013, magistrates can issue fines of £5,000 to dealers who trade in cash.

The law also gives councils and police the power to shut down businesses should they flout legislation.

Call to collar food

Volunteer Claire Brown, daughter Evie, aged four, and Tommy the tabby appeal for food donations and homes

PET food is in short supply at a sanctuary near Wolverhampton which has seen a surge in the number of cats it is looking after. Members of the public are now being asked to donate items to the Kats Cradle Cat Rescue in Coven so staff can try and help meet rising demand.

Before Christmas the centre had nine kittens and 48 adults cats with more than 100 on the waiting list. Owner of the sanctuary, Debbie Brookes, said the centre has been the busiest it has ever been since it was launched in 2002.

She is encouraging animal lovers to also donate food to the centre which is run by volunteers.

To make a donation call 01902 791794 or 07944 105033.

Dazzling dame can switch in a minute

OSTRICH feather headdresses, wigs of all shapes, colours and sizes, a sea of sequins and dresses decorated with mirrors – this ain't your average wardrobe.

Welcome to the weird and wacky world of the pantomime dame, and a glimpse inside this year's extravagant dressing room at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre.

Rows of dresses, jewellery and shoes line up ready to dazzle at each performance of this year's panto.

And, ladies take note. While the time it takes women to get ready for a good knees- up may be the stuff of many a household dispute, this dame can transform herself from one wacky creation to the next in less than a minute.

Outlandish

Taking the role of Queen Passionella in the production of Sleeping Beauty, comedy female impersonator and cabaret star Ceri Dupree rapidly changes between 11 jaw-dropping costumes during the course of the show – each more outlandish than the last.

"I'm from the old school," says Mr Dupree, who is originally from Wales and has played to audiences worldwide for almost 30 years.

"I believe the dame should change on every entrance. Because there are 11 changes, there are 11 pairs of shoes, 11 sets of jewellery, 11 wigs and headdresses.

"You have got to be organised. It's run like a military operation.

"We do a 42-second change in this show, which is a killer," he admits. "Others I have 10 minutes for, the more elaborate ones.

"I have two people helping me and it's literally choreographed like a routine. You take things off to a beat in the music. You have got to be on the ball. Seconds tick away and then you're late."

Towering feathered headdresses and blinding sequins are only some of the elements that make up Mr Dupree's enormous and spectacular outfits, one of which weighs as much as a sack of potatoes, while another cost thousands of pounds to make.

Apart from one – a dress worn by the late, great Danny La Rue in the 1969 production of Queen Passionella and the Sleeping Beauty at the Saville Theatre in London – they have all been personally designed by Mr Dupree.

"I always say if it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing," he says. "I don't have any that are really favourites."

He relaxes backstage at The Grand Theatre

Costumed up on stage

He designed 10 of the 11 outrageous costumes he dons in Sleeping Beauty

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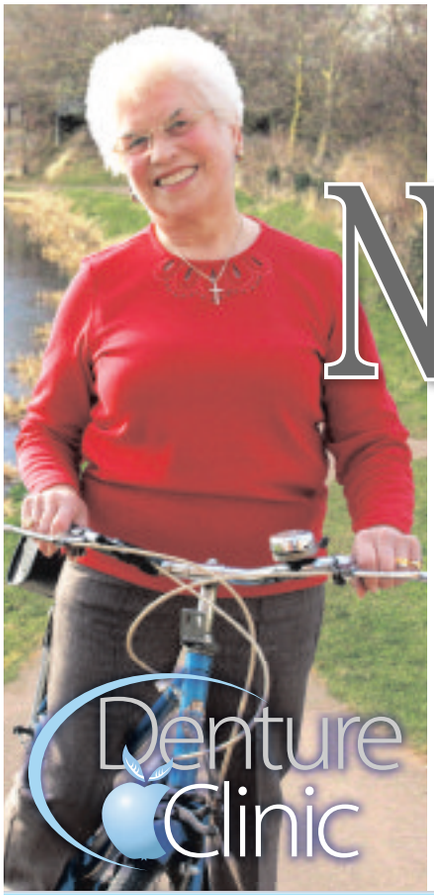

We're all prone to make New Year resolutions – eating healthily, walking more and shedding a few pounds to name a few. Many of those intentions involve lifestyle decisions and seizing the opportunity for change. A recent Radio 4 broadcast explored the view of 'Your whole life is lived through your teeth'. The concept for many is true and none more so for the effervescent Ann Skitt of Willenhall, who made a New Year resolution to ditch her old, troublesome dentures and get a brand new smile.

Is this the right time for you to do the same?

New Year ... new smile

ANN Skitt retrieves her bike from the garage, deftly fixes a slipped chain, and is ready "to go anywhere."

By her own confession it's an antique with a capacious, black leather-cloth saddlebag (no longer manufactured) and just three Sturmey-Archer gears. For nearly 20 years it's been a faithful companion and her primary source of transport. Her enthusiasm to get on the saddle belies her years. "I don't drive, but cycle everywhere I can," she says.

A young–at-heart 74-year-old, she oozes charisma and charm, still goes to the gym "when she needs to shed a few pounds" and is the life and soul of the party at her local Young At Heart Club where she is a volunteer worker.

"I retired at 60, but I always have to be doing something. The club has some elderly people who never really see anyone from week to week and I love helping. We do lunches and have a game of bingo and a laugh," she adds.

She admits to constantly making choices to live life to the limit and indulging herself as popular hairdressers' model at Wolverhampton's award-winning Ultimate Hairdressing salon whenever she fancies a new look.

"I love meeting the students and they treat me lovely," she says.

It's hard to imagine that his retired assembly worker, who completed 45 years' service at Willenhall's famous Josiah Parkes & Sons lock manufacturers, could ever be knocked back. But failing teeth "became an embarrassment," she recalls.

Plucked up the courage

"My remaining bottom teeth were terribly discoloured and my partial lower denture was unstable. You could never eat anything like nuts and I was always so conscious of the way they looked. If I cooked lamb chops or a steak I'd struggle to eat it – it would take me ages, but I can eat anything now," she says with a smile.

Ann called time on her long-standing dental problems after reading an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353 and his work as principal at the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley.

"I had a couple of articles and kept them for nearly a year before I plucked up the courage to see Steve. I knew exactly what I wanted and was happy to put up with a bit of discomfort to get there," she says.

With four implants in her upper and four in the lower jaw to secure implant-retained over-dentures, Ann now has a perfect smile and functional teeth.

"I love my teeth and they have given me so much more confidence. You don't realise how having bad teeth affect until you have treatment like this and you get the confidence back. The whole shape of my mouth has changed.

"I told Steve I didn't want teeth like Cilla Black or Stacey Solomon, they would not look good on someone my age," she adds.

Husband Brian is full of praise – "It's taken years off her and the teeth are just perfect for her."

Her teeth were hand-crafted on the premises at the Denture Clinic and implant surgery was carried out by Jonathon Pugh BDS MSc (Implant Dentistry), principal of Total Implant Solutions in Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.

A long-standing working relationship between Jon and Steve has fused two dental disciplines which continues to enjoy excellent clinical outcomes.

"Both Steve and Jon were lovely with me. I've told all my friends they need to see them too," says Ann.

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Making waves with zoo repairs

IT HAS been a familiar sight to generations of visitors passing through the turnstiles at Dudley Zoo.

And now the iconic wave entrance at the attraction in Castle Hill is being carefully restored to ensure it welcomes many more families for years to come.

The eye-catching building is one of two of the zoo's historic Tecton structures, which were first constructed more than 70 years ago, using pre-stressed concrete – a pioneering system at the time.

And now staff are carrying on the tradition with groundbreaking work to carry out repairs on two of these famous structures – the first time this has been done with concrete buildings.

The Tecton structures date back to the mid-1930s when architects were able to mould the concrete to create attractive enclosures to fit in with the landscape and the steep slopes of the Castle Hill site.

Accurate

Today the zoo has the world's largest single collection of Tecton buildings and in 2009 all 12 structures received World Monuments Fund status, alongside Machu Picchu and the Taj Mahal.

The wave entrance and the Safari Shop are among four that are being renovated thanks to cash from part of a wider £1.15 million lottery-funded programme.

Work began in September and has seen the zoo join forces with history experts to ensure accurate materials and techniques are used.

Members of the 20th Century Society have helped the attraction find the exact concrete formula used to make the buildings so it can be recreated for the restoration. Meanwhile zoo chief executive Peter Suddock has also attended a four-day course in Sussex on concrete mixing and building repair to understand the work involved.

During the work staff have also discovered the original paint scheme for both the shop and entrance – terracotta red and a light sky blue, which they are looking to recreate. "It's looking really brilliant. We're discovering things we didn't know about," Mr Suddock said.

Following Christmas the windows, glass and doors will be installed in the shop before it is fitted out ready to welcome visitor by Easter. In March work will start on the other two Tecton structures due to be refurbished - the bear ravine and kiosk 1.

The restoration project, which also included repairing and re-opening the chairlift last year, is being boosted by the zoo, which will invest £600,000 on a retail complex, Tecton interpretation centre and upgrading toilets and food outlets. New service roads are also being constructed.

Taking a look at refurbishment standing on the main entrance roof at Dudley Zoo is chief executive Peter Suddock

The iconic turnstile entrance due to get a revamp

Work to ungrade roads is part of the £1.15m project

Award for train staff who saved life of passenger

STAFF at a train station, who saved a man's life when he suffered a heart attack, have been given an award by West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Quick-thinking staff at Wolverhampton Railway Station sprang into action when pensioner Norman Brotherton collapsed. The 76-year-old said he 'owed staff his life'.

Station manager Dave Whitehouse, platform workers Steve Wade, Raj Parkesh, Steve Vickers and Kim Weaver Davis have all won praise.

Mr Brotherton was one of two people to have been saved by staff this year. He and his wife Jean were on their way to Yorkshire for a week's holiday last March when they were told their train had been cancelled and they had to take a replacement bus.

Paramedics

But moments after boarding, Mr Brotherton, of Penn, stopped breathing. Staff gave CPY and used a defibrillator until the paramedics arrived. Mr Brotherton said: "I don't know anything at all about that day or for two days after. All I know is that I was sitting on a bus and I died. The staff at the train station are wonderful people and I owe them my life."

The railway staff were commended by West Midlands Ambulance Service at the Excellence in the Community Awards. The Railway Station itself also received an award in recognition of the efforts the business puts into training staff in first aid.

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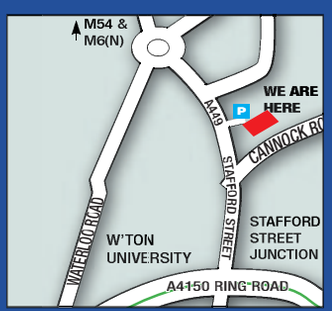

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NEWS

£4.2m will be used to help vulnerable families

MORE than £400,000 will be invested into vulnerable families' homes every year for the next 10 years.

A total of £4.2 million will be pumped into homes and services provided by Heantun Housing Association in Wolverhampton and Staffordshire, thanks to a deal that will see it join West Bromwich-based Accord Group.

The housing association, which provides accommodation to more than 3,500 vulnerable people in 1,200 affordable homes, as well as support and care services, took the decision to choose Accord as its preferred partner.

Fly-tipping fines hike is overdue, says mayor

FORCING fly-tippers and irresponsible pet owners to fork out higher fines for environmental crimes in Wolverhampton is 'long overdue', it was claimed.

Mayor of Wolverhampton Councillor Milkinder Jaspal said he was fully behind plans to increase penalties and revealed residents regularly complained about rubbish blighting the city streets.

The city council is expected to give the green light for fines of £75 for pet owners who allow their dog to foul.

The cost of failing to clean up is currently £50. It is one of a number of fines the authority wants to increase, including introducing new £300 fines for fly-tippers, and £75 rates for unauthorised distribution of literature.

Message

Councillor Jaspal said: "This is long overdue in my view. In my ward it is like stepping stones as you try and dodge dog mess and it is simply caused by irresponsible dog owners.

I'm completely for this because dog mess and littering are the biggest complaints I get from residents. It is these that are making our city look untidy."

Councillor Jaspal said he also backed a proposed £120 rise for fly-tipping fines.

He added: "Fly-tipping costs the council a lot of money and the people who commit these offences need to get the message that it will not be tolerated."

Success on training course is just the job

EVERY student on a training course for jobseekers, run with the support of the Jobcentre, has found employment.

The Preparing to Work in the Engineering and Manufacturing Industry course, based at the City of Wolverhampton College, saw all 14 of its students find jobs within days of leaving.

Tipton-based car interiors manufacturer, Cab Automotive, took on 13 youngsters and another was placed with a local employer.

Owen Payne Recruitment services assisted with the course where jobseekers attend a one-week pre-recruitment training programme run by the college's employability team.

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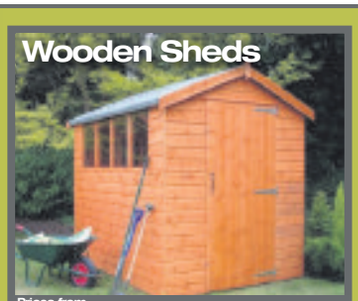
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Dozens sign up to boost career

DOZENS of people have signed up to a scheme to help boost their career prospects. People living in the Park Village area of Wolverhampton are being given the chance to get help into training or unemployment.

The Park Village Employability Scheme targets in particular those who speak English as a second language.

A drop in session was held to launch the scheme. It is being run by Manjit Cheema and Karen Sahota, from the north East Neighbourhood Services Team, who will provide support and run workshops and courses.

Wolverhampton's cabinet boss Councillor Elias Mattu said: "I am delighted with the response we have had so far for the Park Village Employability Scheme."

HIV figures in past decade show rise of 150 per cent

THERE has been a rise of up to 150 per cent in the number of HIV sufferers in Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire in the past decade, new figures show.

Wolverhampton has reported the lowest increase in the Black Country but has still seen an increase in the numbers of people living with the illness of 130 per cent.

In South Staffordshire the number has increased by 150 per cent. Meanwhile one in every 404 people in Sandwell now has HIV following a massive surge in the number of people diagnosed.

Average

The national average is one in every 650 and Sandwell is now officially classed as an HIV high prevalence area – one of only 63 in the country.

Elsewhere Dudley and Stafford have both seen a 400 per cent increase in cases in the past 10 years according to Public Health England. Walsall has seen a 250 per cent rise. Figures also reveal that 63.7 per cent of people who were diagnosed with HIV in Sandwell in 2012 were diagnosed late, meaning they have usually lived with the condition for four or more years. But this is lower than in South Staffordshire where 77.8 per cent of cases were diagnosed late.

This compares with 59.6 per cent in Walsall, 54.8 per cent in Wolverhampton and 44.4 per cent in Stafford. In Dudley the figure is 36.7 per cent.

City coach firm on the road to success

A COACH business is taking on new staff and has bought the premises it previously rented thanks to a six-figure loan.

CoachChoice in Bilston has been running since 2000 and supplies coaches to tour operators across the UK and Europe.

It has bought its 1.2-acre base at Hudley House in Hickman Road, where it has been based since last year, after securing the loan from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking.

Recruit

It will also be extending its services next year to run its own tours programme covering the UK and Europe. CoachChoice has also taken on two new members of staff and plans to recruit again in the new year.

It currently employs 14 and will need three more when three new vehicles arrive in March

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Taking part in an event, be it organised or created by yourself, helps to raise the £4 million shortfall needed each year to run Compton

Without such kindness and generosity the organisation would not receive such heart-warming feedback from the people for whom it cares

There is a wide variety of volunteering roles available at Compton Hospice

Supporters make such a difference

AS we welcome in 2014, our thoughts focus on turning over a new leaf and setting New Year's resolutions. A popular resolution is to 'do more for charity'.

Everyone at Compton Hospice wishes to extend a heartfelt thank-you to its supporters, for the fantastic help given throughout 2013, hoping that this will continue to grow over the coming year.

Compton Hospice is a registered charity based in Wolverhampton which provides free care and support to patients with life limiting illnesses and their families.

If you are thinking about supporting a charity in 2014, why not consider supporting Compton Hospice?

Last year Compton Hospice supported in excess of 2,000 patients and families affected by life limiting illnesses. This care was delivered to patients on the ward, in the day care unit and in people's homes across Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell, parts of Shropshire and Staffordshire.

The aim is to make a difference to people's lives at what is a very difficult time. This is done by treating people, not conditions, whether their needs are physical, psychological, social or spiritual. Each year it provides care and support to patients and families free of charge. The cost of delivering such care amounts to just under £6 million per year, of which only a third is received from government. This means that £4 million needs to be raised each year to keep services running.

Staff at the hospice are therefore incredibly grateful to everyone who contributes to raising much needed funds on its behalf as well as to those who offer their time as volunteers. Without such kindness and generosity the organisation would not receive such heart-warming feedback from the people for whom it cares."

Some of the comments received include:

- "Knowing that you are getting the right help, from professionals that will take you on the right path – I couldn't ask for anything more than that".
- "It's just a lovely place to be, and without it I wouldn't be as positive as I am now about my condition".

There are a number of ways you can support Compton Hospice.

1. Become a volunteer

There is a wide variety of volunteering roles available at Compton Hospice. From receptionist to gardener, driver to shop assistant, patient visitor to cook, the diversity of roles means anyone over the age of 16 can get involved. With time scales varying from an hour a month to a weekly or daily four- hour shift, we can accommodate time commitments at any level. Weekend and evening volunteers are also vital to the hospice, meaning you can fit a voluntary role around your work schedule.

2. Take part in an event

Compton Hospice runs a number of events throughout the year which aim to raise both funds and awareness of our services.

A hospice spokesperson says: "If you'd like to join us we have scheduled for 2014 our Family Fun Days aptly named 'Compton in the Park' which will take place on June 21 and 22 in Wolverhampton's West Park.

The event will feature a variety of live performances, fairground rides and even our 'Dive for Dosh' Bungee Jump.

New for 2014 we also launch our 'Colour Blast' featuring a 5K run which promises to be nothing but lively, energetic and very colourful.

Our popular Halloween and Christmas events will also return, and we'll be sure to throw in a few extra one off events for good measure. Keep up to date with latest events via the website."

3. Organise your own event

If you would prefer to organise your own event to raise funds for Compton Hospice, the team can support you every step of the way. They have staff who can offer advice and guidance as well as provide you with Compton Hospice T-Shirts, banners and various other items for your event.

4. Take on a challenge

If one of your new year's resolutions is to get fit why not consider taking on a running, walking, cycling or any other kind of fitness challenge on behalf of Compton Hospice.

5. Make a donation

You can make a donation to Compton Hospice in person by visiting our main reception, online, by text or by post. What's more we guarantee that for every £1 donated a minimum of 83p will go directly to patient care. Details about how to make a donation can be found on our website.

6. Visit one of the shops

If you are unable to make a financial donation why not visit one of our 24 charity shops across the Black Country. You could help by making a donation of quality second hand clothing, furniture, books or brick-a-brack. You never know, whilst you're there you may just pick up a bargain. So if you have pledged to support a charity this year, please consider supporting Compton Hospice. With your help the team can continue to make a real difference to the lives of hundreds of people living with life limiting illnesses across the Black Country.

Compton Hospice
Caring Together

CHARITY PROFILE:

Charity name: Compton Hospice

Address: Number 4 Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, WV3 9DH

Phone number: 0845 2255 497

Website: www.compton-hospice.org.uk

Key point of contact: Sue Chance and fundraising co-ordinator Di Gatenby

Key areas of activity / sectors:
A Wolverhampton-based charity which has been supporting patients facing a life-limiting illness, and their families, for more than 30 years. A fully qualified team of doctors, nurses and support workers are on hand to provide the best possible care for patients and their families during a very difficult period.

Mission statement:
A place to find shelter on the most difficult part of life's journey - offering a helping hand, a listening ear, and the caring support of people who understand.

Education department:
Since 1983, Compton Hospice Education and Training Centre has been training a range of healthcare professionals in all aspects of palliative care and is known as a centre of excellence. It has helped hundreds of doctors, nurses, home care assistants, nursing homes, social workers and individuals understand the complex issues surrounding the treatment of people with life-limiting illnesses.

Geographic areas covered:
Services are available free-of-charge to people in Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, South Staffordshire and East Shropshire

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Oxley	7pm	Goodyears Pavilion, Stafford Road Jade 07545558125
Wednesfield	7pm	St. Patricks RC Church, Wolverhampton Road David 07903418911
Short Heath	7pm	Short Heath Methodist Church, Wesley Road Sue 07817977542

TUESDAY

Bradley	9.30am & 7pm	St. Martins Community Centre, Slater Street Ann 07703566618
Essington	5pm & 7pm	St. Johns Church Hall, Hill Street Gill 07929346145
Bushbury	5pm & 7pm	London Midlands Railway Club, Bushbury Lane Rachel 07794065666
Palmers Cross	7pm	Palmers Cross Primary School, Windemere Road Lynda 01902 746001

WEDNESDAY

Low Hill	9am	Low Hill Community Centre, Kidderminster Avenue Audrey 01902 604789
*Wednesfield	3.30pm, 5pm & 7pm	Wednesfield Conservative Club, Neachells Lane Dawn 07756 234690 *
New Invention	5pm & 7pm	The Victory Club, Lichfield Road Gill 07929346145
Lower Bradley	7pm	Lower Bradley Community Centre, Wallace Road Debbie 07900190270
Featherstone	7pm	Whitgreave Primary School, The Avenue Dawn 07848412313

THURSDAY

Wednesfield	9.30am	Wednesfield Conservative Club, Neachells Lane Dawn 07756234690
Fordhouses	7pm	Fordhouses Methodist Church, Winchester Road Jade 07545 558125
Wednesfield	5pm & 7pm	St. Albans Church, Griffiths Drive Dawn 07756 234690
Bilston	7pm	Bilston Baptist Church, Prouds Lane Audrey 01902 60478
Fallings Park	5pm & 7pm	Fallings Park Methodist Church, Wimbourne Road Rachel 07794065666

SATURDAY

Wednesfield	9.30 am	Community Methodist Church, Wood End Road David 01902 602644

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Advertising Feature

Fitness and Martial Arts Centre celebrate their 10 year anniversary

Firewalker Fitness and Martial Arts is celebrating 10 years of business.That is 10 years helping the good people of Wolverhampton get fit, healthy and happy.

Firewalker has a reputation of offering superb fitness and weight loss classes as well as its renowned martial arts and boxing. Kirkwood Walker, the managing director, created Firewalker to give the people of this town a friendly and motivating facility to empower them to be able to achieve their personal goals, no matter how big or small they may be. Kirkwood recognized that his own success as a martial artist and a social worker was down to his family, positive teams and highly motivated and experienced professionals. Members of Firewalker often comment that it feels like ''one big family" and that is a major factor in the clubs success. It is a place where people of all different ages, back grounds and abilities come together to get fit and have fun. A place where people can really feel inspired by others around them. Take John Lee for instance, he is one of the oldest members at 77 years young and took up Thai boxing at 75. John is a regular to many of the fitness classes from Spin classes to Kettlebell classes, and an inspiration to all members. And he is not alone.

Monique Mcinnis is also 77 years young and does the fun runs and half marathons around Wolverhampton. Far from doing fitness all her life Monique only started doing these runs after she joined the club in her 70s and lost weight under the guidance Firewalker's personal trainers. Another key to Firewalker's ongoing success is the high level of expertise that it has under one roof. Manager, Joby Clayton along with Fitness Manager Kevin Blower has put together a strong team of friendly and experienced staff. Michelle Clayton is one such member of staff who has helped literally 100s of people lose weight and keep it off over her 15 year career in fitness and martial arts. Michelle takes many of the classes at the gym and also runs successful weight loss group training and personal training in all aspects of fitness, diet and lifestyle. Wolverhampton often gets a bad press when it comes to obesity and Firewalker is also keen not only to help adults lose the pounds and feel better about themselves but also to get the young kids of Wolverhampton to enjoy exercise. The club does martial arts classes for as young as 6 years old and these classes are all about empowering the kids with confidence and self discipline so that they not only achieve in sport but also in education and in wider society. Kirkwood and his team will continue to be a shining light for years to come and Firewalker will continue to be the healthy heart of Wolverhampton for it members, no matter what age or ability.

John Lee 77 years young lifting a kettlebell

Firewalker members just before a charity fun run

Michelle Clayton former thai boxing world champ and inspirational personal trainer

firewalker
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Smokers are offered a liquid alternative

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

IF you're a smoker, the thought of quitting is somewhat daunting and usually gets pushed right to the back of your mind along with the in-law's birth dates and many other things.

But it seems that smokers have finally been given a big helping hand in the battle – the electronic cigarette.

Now, a Wolverhampton company looking to diversify has begun stocking a ground-breaking UK-based range of electronic cigarettes.

Cartridge World in Stafford Road is now stocking the No-Match range, with company bosses saying that not only are they a healthier alternative to cigarettes, they are a much cheaper option.

Franchise owner Richard Williams said: "Our main business is printer cartridge re-filling and re-manufacturing. Although our sales to businesses are good, we have suffered from the retail slow down and have brought in the No-Match brand to compensate"

At the moment the electronic cigarette industry is relatively un-regulated, but this is likely to change in the future.

No-Match is staying one step ahead of the regulation and providing a high quality products which are both CE and RoHS certified.

"The main reason we chose the No-Match brand was to bring in a quality product which fitted in with the ethos of Cartridge World."

The e-cigarette is a battery powered device that converts liquid into a vapour. There's no fire, no ash and no smoky smell, but the best part – they don't contain all of the harmful chemicals associated with smoking tobacco cigarettes, such as carbon monoxide, tar and even arsenic. One of the big advantages is try before you buy — customers can try any of the No-Match liquids in store before purchase to make sure they get a flavour and strength they are happy with

No-Match products are available at Cartridge World in Wolverhampton

Benefits

"A number of people have already got the kits but are swapping over to our liquids. With the cost savings and the health benefits it makes sense to change," said Mr Williams.

The No-Match liquids have a full range of nicotine content to choose from and the first thing Mr Williams and his staff will do is gauge what strength is appropriate for the customer. This starts from zero nicotine content up to 3.6 per cent, with the average chosen being 1.8 per cent.

There are different offers available with kits starting from £27.99 and liquids at £4.99. One bottle of liquid will last the average smoker seven to 10 days.

With the average pack of 20 cigarettes costing £7 this works out at saving over £150 a month. "In the current economic climate that's a huge saving," said Mr Williams.

Cartridge World is currently stocking around 50 different flavours at present, but the No-Match brand offers a staggering 150 different flavours.

It has around 25 different tobacco flavours which replicate the major tobacco brands, but also has flavours such as cherry, peach, candy floss, aniseed and Red Bull flavour.

E-cigarettes are clearly a healthier alternative to tobacco cigarettes which cause millions of deaths every year. Some users have reported a reduction in their "smokers' coughs", sharpened senses of taste and smell and improved sleep patterns.

Fitness secret – use every opportunity that you can

THE secret to getting fit without spending a fortune is to use every opportunity to be active. What you need is a bit of get-up-and-go and good planning.

Walking is underrated as a form of exercise, but it's one of the easiest ways to get more activity into your day, lose weight and become healthier.

Research shows that people who fit moderate activity, such as walking, into their daily life burn more energy than those who make weekly visits to the gym.

Try to fit walking into your routine by ditching the car for short journeys, walking all or part of your journey to work, getting off the bus or train one stop early and planning longer walks at the weekends.

To reap the health benefits, aim to walk 10,000 steps a day, which can burn up to 400 calories. To keep track of your walking, use a pedometer.

Liberating

Rediscover the invigorating and liberating experience of riding a bike and boost your health in the process. Figures show that about 42 per cent of Britons own a bike. Whether you're cycling to work, to school, to the shops or just for fun, the humble bicycle is an easy way to get more active.

Cycling to work is one of the easiest ways of fitting exercise into your day. It'll also save you money on petrol or public transport costs. If you don't have a bike, you may be able to get a cheap bike through the Cycle to Work scheme. If you have an old bike that's been gathering dust, consider having it serviced at a specialist bike shop to ensure it's roadworthy before taking it out for a spin.

Remember the games you used to play in the playground? Games like 'hide and seek' and 'cowboys and Indians' aren't just good fun, they're an excellent workout too.

These games involve short sharp bursts of activity and periods of rest, which are very effective for improving fitness, especially if you're not usually very active. Park games are an ideal way for all the family to get active together, have fun and reap the health benefits in the process.

If you're looking for something less energetic, these exercises for older people are ideal if you want to improve your health, lift your mood and remain independent. Don't worry if you've not done much for a while, these exercises are easy, gentle to follow and can be done indoors.

Walking to work is healthy and saves money

If you've not used a skipping rope since your school playground days then now's your chance to rediscover how fun and beneficial skipping can be. An excellent way to keep fit, skipping can be done anywhere at any time. Just a few minutes' skipping training brings a whole range of health benefits, including heart and lung fitness, strong bones, balance and flexibility. The average person will burn up to 200 calories during 15 minutes of skipping.

Interesting

Skipping is a strenuous exercise, so start slowly. Try skipping for 20-30 seconds, marching on the spot for 30 seconds, and then repeat. As your fitness improves you can increase the time you skip for. Once you have perfected the basic move, you can make your workout more interesting by trying different jumps.

The idea of walking up to a group of strangers during a game of football and asking to join in may sound slightly unnerving but, provided you can work up the bottle, this is both an excellent way to get fit and to make friends. Choose a group of players of similar age and ability and who seem like they're just starting their game.

Your local leisure or sports centre may well be offering initiatives such as free exercise classes or a free swim on certain days of the week to encourage people to get in shape.

● *www.nhs.uk*

NEW YEAR NEW YOU 2014

Important to keep health resolutions

NEW Year's resolutions are a bit like babies: They're fun to make but difficult to maintain.

Each January, roughly one in three people resolve to better themselves in some way.

A much smaller percentage of people actually make good on those resolutions. While about 75 per cent of people stick to their goals for at least a week, often less than half (46 per cent) are still on target six months later.

It's hard to keep up the enthusiasm months after you've swept up the confetti, but it's not impossible. This year, pick one of the following worthy resolutions, and stick with it.

LOSE WEIGHT

The fact that this is perennially among the most popular resolutions suggests just how difficult it is to commit to. But you can succeed if you don't expect overnight success. Plan for bumps in the road. Use a food journal to keep track of what you eat.

Use a food journal to keep track of your weight and what you eat

SEE FRIENDS

Feel like old friends (or family) have fallen by the wayside? It's good for your health to reconnect with them. Research suggests people with strong social ties live longer than those who don't.

GIVE UP SMOKING

Fear that you've failed too many times to try again? Talk to any ex-smoker, and you'll see that multiple attempts are often the path to success. Think of the cash you'll save and the health benefits.

SAVE MONEY

Save money by making healthy lifestyle changes. Walk or ride your bike to work, or explore carpooling. Cut back on gym membership costs by exercising at home. Take stock of what you have in the fridge and make a grocery list.

CUT YOUR STRESS

A little pressure now and again won't kill us; in fact, short bouts of stress give us an energy boost. But if stress is chronic, it can increase your risk of, or worsen, insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease, and more. Long work hours, little sleep, no exercise, poor diet, and not spending time with family and friends can contribute to stress

VOLUNTEER

Our happiness increases when we help others.

HAPPINESS

Happiness is good for your health. People with positive emotions are less likely than their gloomier peers to have a heart attack or develop heart disease. Positive emotions can make people more resilient and resourceful.

BACK TO SCHOOL

No matter how old you are, heading back to the classroom can help revamp your career, introduce you to new friends, and boost your brainpower.

CUT ALCOHOL INTAKE

While much has been written about the health benefits of a small amount of alcohol, too much tippling is still the bigger problem. Drinking alcohol in excess can increase the risk of depression, memory loss, or even seizures. Chronic heavy drinking boosts your risk of liver and heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and mental deterioration, and even cancers.

GET MORE SLEEP

You probably already know that a good night's rest can do wonders for your mood—and appearance. A lack of sleep has been linked to a greater risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. And sleep is crucial for strengthening memories (a process called consolidation).

TAKE A HOLIDAY

The joys and rewards of vacations can last long after the suitcase is put away. Travelling allows us to tap into life as an adventure, and we can make changes in our lives without having to do anything too bold or dramatic.

HAPPY FAMILIES

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- *www.health.com*

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NEW YEAR NEW YOU 2014

Less is more in the beauty game

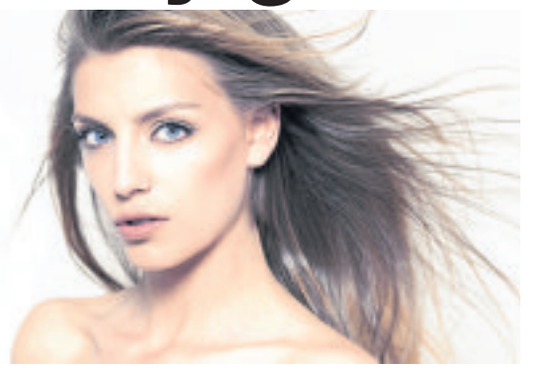
IT'S a new year, a chance for a new start, and what better way to face it than with a brand-new look?

While you may not be ready to commit to (or be able to afford) a full-fledged professional makeover, experts say, you can still recharge your spirits with a new look.

And with simpler, more natural clothes and makeup in style, it won't break your budget.

The trick is to pare down your product inventory for a look that says 'less is more'. Although many of the newest foundations and powders are lighter and more natural-looking, experts say you can achieve a similar look with items you already own -- just use them sparingly.

The key to getting that natural look, is to blend well, then skip the powder puff. Instead, use a brush to lightly dust your skin with loose powder.



Heavy make up is not needed to make an impact

Lighter

When it comes to updating your eye makeup, leave the complicated four-colour shadow kits in the drawer. A single colour on the lid, one that is lighter and less intense than in recent years.

To further soften your look, toss the heavy mascara that gives you that clumpy 'false lash' look. In its place: Long, sweeping lashes that are separated and well-defined.

And be sure to curl those lashes, using one coat of waterproof mascara to lock in the look.

For lips that look new, skip the sticky patent-leather glosses. Just line and fill in your lips with a natural-colour pencil, then top with a pink-toned gloss that has a touch of shimmer.

To complement the look change your cheek colour to a warm watermelon pink. Pinkish blush promises to replace traditional bronzer as the way to add healthy colour to skin in the upcoming season. And the less is more also applies to clothes. Who among us wouldn't love to start the New Year with a brand-new wardrobe? But who among us can afford it? The good news: You can make over your wardrobe by adding just a few key pieces (and tossing a few as well).

Choose one vintage-inspired piece to capture the essence of the trend. Pair it with something modern, like a slim pencil skirt or well-cut jeans.

Shades

While shape, style, and cut are key ingredients of any fashion trend, experts say, don't overlook the power of colour to bring your look up to date.

Tuck away those all-black outfits and mix up your separates with earthy naturals, using shades of brown, khaki, and ivory for basic pieces.

Accent the look with muted water-color prints, or geometric patterns with an ethnic look and feel. To find which of these new colours looks best on you, Hughes says, look for tones that either mimic your natural colouring or complement it.

To find your personal colours: Have your picture taken in natural sunlight and blow it up to an 8x10 size. Then trot off to your local hardware store and head for the paint counter.

And if none of your personal colours happen to be in style this season? Wear them anyway. Keep them closest to your face, and use the trendier colours as accents in shoes, bags, jewellery and belts.

But experts say that we shouldn't get so caught up in trends that we lose sight of our personal style. Dress in whatever look is right for your body shape and your personal style.

Good taste always transcends trends and always looks right.

● *Info from www.webmd.com*

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What's On! Wolverhampton

Festive fun with Cerys

Cerys Matthews
Town Hall, Birmingham

THERE are two words which sum up a Cerys Matthews show, great fun. The Welsh singer/songwriter and BBC Radio 6 presenter rarely stops talking, with the exception of when she is singing but she is such an enthusiastic and engaging character.

She opened the first of her two sets on the banjo with a Woody Guthrie song, Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet?, Matthews' valley spring tones filled the Town Hall with a haunting version of the tune.

Most of her songs have a lengthy introduction and she openly boasted that the longest preamble she has done to date was at the nearby Glee Club, where she chatted for 21 minutes between songs.

When she finally got around to singing Johnny Come Lately, from her Catatonia days, there was more than a hint of Kate Bush about her tones.

A Welsh language song Moliannwn came from her Hulla Baloo album which is totally in Welsh.

She treated the audience to Chardonnay, from her Cockahoop album, followed by a great version of Jingle Bells and a traditional Deck The Halls followed by a funky version of Ding Dong Merrily on High, again with the audience brought in to provide vocal support.

Danny Farragher

Gok glitz and giggles too in pantomime makeover

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Birmingham Hippodrome

MAKING his panto debut in Birmingham, fashion guru Gok Wan should be renamed Gok the giggler as he is obviously enjoying his pantomime makeover as much as the audience.

Judging by his vocal performance, a singing career is probably off the agenda but for glitz, glamour and celebrity wow factor, not to mention outfits that look like they've been designed for Ming the Merciless, Gok as the Man in the Mirror is most definitely on style.

Review by Leon Burakowski

Dragon

But he is only part of the ensemble that make Brume spectacular panto a surefire hit with lots of singing, dancing, slapstick and naughty humour – plus a fearsome flying dragon that looks more than capable of wolfing down seven dwarves and probably a hobbit too.

Gook not the only first timer in panto land, song and dance man Gary Wilmott shows there's nothing like a Dame to raise the fun factor. As Nora Crumble, the castle cook, he is the focus for some of the funniest routines and also brings a tear to the eye with a charming song about motherhood.

As Snow White, Over The Rainbow winner Danielle Hope, who has now played both Dorothy and Epoxide in the West End, is an excellent singer with the kind of smile that lights up a room and is dressed just like her animated Disney predecessor.

Despite this being her first panto too, Miss Hope could hold her own with showbiz and soap stalwart John Partridge who, as Prince John, gives 100 per cent in enthusiasm and energy.

This show also boasts two funnymen with ventriloquist and comic Paul Zerline and Brian Conley-lookalike Matt Slack as brothers Muddles and Oddson.

Or maybe that should be three, because Zerline puppet Sam seems to have a life of his own, despite a technical hitch on press night that rubbed a little magic off the puppet's big moment.

Completing the package is former The Colbys and Dynasty star Stephanie Beacham as a superbly hissable wicked queen – important enough to have Gok as her personal style consultant – and the magnificent seven themselves. The dwarves are not played by the height-challenged but seven actors in ingenious, hilarious costumes that must leave them with very sore knees.

All in all, this year's Hippodrome panto is like a Gok makeover – fab-u-lous – and it continues until February 2.

Wicked Queen Sadista (Stephanie Beacham) puts a spell on Oddjob (Matt Slack) in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at BirminghamHippodrome

Gok Wan as The Man in the Mirror

Danielle Hope as Snow White

Music from around world

Magical Christmas Tree Show, Newhampton Folk Club

IF YOU are bold enough to sing House of the Rising Sun to the tune of Little Town of Bethlehem and Rock Around the Clock in mediaeval Middle English then, if only for novelty value, you are worth listening to.

The one thing you can say about the trio Chris Parkinson, Pete Morton and Emily Sanders, who was standing in for the ill Maggie Boyle, is their festive may not be traditional but it's damn good entertainment. They opened with The Mountain Road and Christmas Eve with Parkinson on melodeon, Morton guitar and Sanders on fiddle. Right from the off, they had come to have a good time.

The magical Christmas tree of the title was a rather pathetic looking specimen but it was really only there to let the audience pick scrolls from the branches which had instructions for the group. One such was for music from around the world. Parkinson opened with a Moldova tune on accordion then Morton took over singing Malaika, which means angel in Swahili, and Sanders played a gorgeous version of Hava Nagila on fiddle.

Sanders put on clogs to give a traditional dance to the tune of Byker Hill. Things turned surreal as Morton picked up a tune which started as Greensleeves but moved into the Middle Ages version of Rock Around The Clock. You have to hear it to really appreciate it. This was the last show of 2013 for the folk club but thankfully it will be back later this year.

DF

PUZZLER PAGE SOLUTIONS

The puzzle page was not carried for the weeks of December 19 and December 26. So that our readers can check their answers we have listed below the solutions to the puzzle page carried on December 12 (No 251).

CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Marksmanship; 7 Train; 8 Chair; 9 Run; 10 Malingers; 11 Accent; 12 Parade; 15 Martially; 17 Tea; 18 Nudge; 19 Tuber; 21 Considerable. Down: 1 Maltreatment; 2 Spa; 3 Annals; 4 Secondary; 5 Irate; 6 Cross-examine; 7 Tonic; 10 Manliness; 13 Aster; 14 Slated; 16 Radio; 20 Bar. QUICK - Across: 1 Confidential; 7 Allow; 8 Blear; 9 Tot; 10 Charlatan; 11 Recent; 12 Stream; 15 Adjourned; 17 Ass; 18 Drift; 19 Tacit; 21 Reprehension. Down: 1 Countermands; 2 Ill; 3 Enwrap; 4 Tabulated; 5 Avert; 6 Transmission; 7 Antic; 10 Conductor; 13 Exact; 14 Snatch; 16 Juice; 20 Can.

SUDOKU

6	2	8	3	5	7	4	9	1
3	5	1	4	8	9	6	2	7
4	7	9	2	1	6	3	8	5
7	8	2	1	9	4	5	3	6
1	4	5	6	2	3	9	7	8
9	3	6	8	7	5	2	1	4
8	1	4	5	3	2	7	6	9
5	9	3	7	6	1	8	4	2
2	6	7	9	4	8	1	5	3

CODEWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	D	Y	C	Z	F	E	O	P	M	B	A	Q
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
T	U	R	S	V	K	X	L	I	G	J	W	H

● For this week's puzzler turn to Page 43

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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 4.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Catherine Tate

Catherine Tate's Nan
BBC1, 9.30pm
It's been a while since we saw Catherine Tate heading up her own series. Not that she hasn't been busy; in recent years she's had a stint as a Doctor Who companion, been a regular in the American version of The Office and starred alongside David Walliams in Big School. But now she's about to resurrect one of the comedy characters who helped to make her name – Joanie Taylor, better known as Nan. Her grandson Jamie is in Africa, so to lend her a hand she's got a new friend, Alice, who doesn't know what she's letting herself in for...

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Frozen Planet. (R)
6.10 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
6.30 Celebrity Mastermind. With Hal Cruttenden, Clare Perkins, Sophie Hosking and Huw Stephens.
7.00 Pointless Celebrities. Featuring actors from Grange Hill, Waterloo Road and The Demon Headmaster.
7.50 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. New series. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers compete by listing as much as they know about given subjects. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws.
8.40 Casualty. Fletch witnesses an explosion at a bar and realises the man who accused him of assault is trapped inside the building.
9.30 Catherine Tate's Nan. The character returns in a one-off comedy special.
10.05 BBC News; Weather.
10.25 Film: Little Fockers. (2010) Premiere. Comedy sequel, starring Ben Stiller and Robert De Niro; National Lottery Update.
11.55 Film: Romance & Cigarettes. (2005) Musical drama, starring James Gandolfini.
1.35 Weatherview. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Film: My Fake Fiance. (2009) **7.30 Film:** Stick It. (2006) **9.10** Life on Earth. (R) **10.05** Life on Earth. (R) **11.00** Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) **11.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.45** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.30 Film:** The Horse Whisperer. (1998) **4.10** Coast. **4.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Further coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **5.30** James May's Toy Stories: The Motorcycle Diary. Building a motorbike and sidecar entirely out of Meccano. (R)
6.30 Flog It! Valuing items in Malvern, Worcestershire. (R)
7.30 Dad's Army. Godfrey is accused of cowardice. (R)
8.00 Morecambe & Wise: Leading Ladies. Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's shows featuring appearances by female stars of stage and screen. (R)
9.00 Dave Allen: God's Own Comedian. A look at the life, career and legacy of the Irish comedy writer and performer, featuring interviews with family and friends and rare archive material. (R)
10.00 Dave Allen: The Immaculate Selection. Memorable routines by the comedian.
11.00 Dave Allen in Search of the English Eccentric. Documentary, first shown in 1974. (R)
11.55 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the opening day at the Lakeside Country Club.
12.45 Darts Extra. **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.15** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.35** The Chase. (R) **12.40** Midsomer Murders. (R) **2.45** Show Me the Telly. (R) **3.45** You've Been Framed! Featuring golfing mishaps. (R) **4.15** Regional Programme; Weather.**4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.45** Live FA Cup Football. Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm). Coverage of the third-round encounter at the Emirates Stadium, as the north London rivals meet in an eye-catching tie.
7.20 Splash! New series. Vernon Kay, Gabby Logan and Tom Daley return with the celebrity diving contest.
8.50 Take Me Out. New series. An IT consultant, an entrepreneur, a daredevil and a student take part.
9.50 The Jonathan Ross Show. New series. The host subjects another batch of celebrity guests to no-holds-barred questioning.
10.50 ITV News; Weather.
11.05 FA Cup Football Highlights. Action from the third round, with fixtures including Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur, Wigan Athletic v Milton Keynes Dons and Macclesfield Town v Sheffield Wednesday.
12.35 Jackpot247. **3.00** Ladette to Lady: Australia. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 The Treacle People. (R) **6.10** Little Wolf's Book of Badness. (R) **6.35 Film:** Arctic Tale. (2007) **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** The American Football Show. **10.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Jamie's Festive Feast. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.35** Come Dine with Me. (R)
6.05 Come Dine with Me. Jane Welch hosts the final dinner party in west London. (R)
6.35 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Speed with Guy Martin. The motorcycle racer takes part in four adrenaline-fuelled challenges, beginning with an attempt to break the British record for outright speed on a bicycle. (R)
8.00 New Secrets of the Terracotta Warriors – Secret History. Recent discoveries about China's Terracotta Army, an extraordinary collection of ceramic sculptures unearthed in 1974 and dating back more than 2,000 years. (R)
9.00 Film: Robin Hood. (2010) An archer returning from the crusades faces a plot by a traitorous knight to aid a French conquest of England. Adventure, with Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett.
11.45 Charlie Brooker's How Videogames Changed the World. The broadcaster delves into the history of the games industry. (R)
1.40 Fresh Meat. (R) **2.25** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.30** Suburgatory. **4.50** 90210. **5.35** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Megaforce. **10.35** Slugterra. **11.00** Jungle Babies: Tarsier Tails. (R) **11.30** Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch. (R) **1.25 Film:** Columbo: Try and Catch Me. (1977) **3.00 Film:** Columbo: A Case of Immunity. (1975) **4.25** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **5.25** Diagnosis Murder. (R)
6.20 Mr & Mrs Murder. New series. Australian detective comedy, starring Shaun Micallef and Kat Stewart.
7.10 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. Two siblings confess to a schoolgirl's murder. (R)
8.00 NCIS. The team tries to prove Ziva had nothing to do with a political assassination carried out by her former Mossad partner – but has to tackle the case without Gibbs's guidance. (R)
9.00 NCIS. Against his better judgement, Gibbs comes out of retirement to help Fornell and his daughter by reopening the case of an escaped convict who is putting their lives in danger. (R)
9.55 5 News Weekend.
10.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous housemates' past 24 hours.
11.00 Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Psych. New series. Psychological analysis of the housemates' behaviour.
12.00 SuperCasino. **3.05** True CSI. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Doctor Who: The Ultimate Guide **8.00** Top Gear **9.00 Film:** Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995) **11.00** Family Guy
BBC Four
7.00 Nasa – Triumph and Tragedy **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Rock 'n' Roll Britannia
ITV2
3.20 Film: Junior (1994) **5.30 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **7.15 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **9.00 Film:** The 40 Year Old Virgin (2005) **11.20 Film:** Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2004)
ITV3
2.50 Housewife, 49 **4.40** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot **11.00** Prime Suspect
ITV4
3.10 Film: Shootout (1971) **5.05 Film:** The War Wagon (1967) **7.10** Storage Wars **8.10 Film:** Police Academy 6: City Under Siege (1989) **10.00 Film:** Lethal Weapon 2 (1989)
E4
4.25 Film: Penelope (2006) **6.10 Film:** Meet Dave (2008) **8.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Waterboy (1998) **10.50** The Inbetweeners **11.55** 8 Out of 10 Cats
Film4
2.55 Baby's Day Out (1994) **4.45** Gambit (1966) **6.55** Employee of the Month (2006) Comedy, with Dane Cook, Dax Shepard and Jessica Simpson. **9.00** Easy A (2010) A teenage girl lies about her non-existent sexual history, and uses the resulting rumours to become the talk of the school. Teen comedy, with Emma Stone and Penn Badgley. **10.50** Troll Hunter (2010)

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Accounting	Book-keeping Award C&G – Level 1	27/02/14	12/06/14	12:50	15:55	£180
Accounting	Computerised Accounts Award C&G – Level 1	27/02/14	12/06/14	18:00	19:30	£104
Accounting	Payroll Certificate – Level 1	29/01/14	09/07/14	18:00	21:15	£180
Accounting	Payroll Certificate – Level 1	30/01/14	10/07/14	14:25	17:30	£180
Art	Associate Glass Term 2	06/01/14	07/04/14	09:00	16:30	£220
Art	Associate Glass Term 3	28/04/14	23/06/14	08:45	16:00	£180
Art	Glass Taster Day	09/03/14	09/03/14	10:00	16:00	£89
Art	Glass Taster Day	14/06/14	14/06/14	10:00	16:00	£89
Childcare	Children and Young People's Workforce – Level 2/3	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	£400/£500*
Construction	Brickwork OCN	14/01/14	25/03/14	18:00	21:00	£224
Construction	Carpentry OCN	14/01/14	25/03/14	18:00	21:00	£224
Construction	Plastering OCN	14/01/14	25/03/14	18:00	21:00	£224
Construction	Plumbing 6218 Award	14/01/14	25/03/14	18:00	21:00	£224
Construction	Wall Tiling OCN	14/01/14	25/03/14	18:00	21:00	£224
Engineering	Abrasive Wheels (Safety in the use of) College certificate	07/02/14	07/02/14	09:00	15:30	£150
Engineering	CAD Advanced Parametric Modelling	27/02/14	15/05/14	18:00	21:00	£320
Engineering	CAD Introduction	27/02/14	15/05/14	18:00	21:00	£320
Engineering	CNC Introduction Part Programming	27/02/14	15/05/14	18:00	21:00	£380
Engineering	Engineering HNC Bridging Course 10 weeks	26/02/14	14/04/14	18:00	21:00	£380
Hairdressing	Hairdressing NVQ – Level 2	Flexible	Flexible	16:00	21:30	£795
IT	ICT CISCO CCNA	22/01/14	21/05/14	18:00	21:00	£1,200
IT	Programming concepts	30/01/14	12/06/14	18:00	21:00	£300
Languages	Introduction to Sign Language	16/01/14	27/03/14	19:00	21:00	£70
Management	Introduction to Team Leading	23/01/14	27/03/14	18:00	21:15	£192
Management	Introduction to Team Leading	01/05/14	03/07/14	18:00	21:15	£192
Public Services	Policing Certificate in Knowledge (QCF) – Level 3	03/02/14	23/06/14	18:00	20:00	£500*
Teaching	Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector CTLLS Certificate	27/01/14	30/06/14	18:00	21:00	£363
Teaching	Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Diploma – Level 2/3	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	£400/£500*
Teaching	Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector PTLLS	27/01/14	30/06/14	09:00	18:00	£163

*Students aged 24+ on Level 3 or higher courses are no longer funded by the Government. Therefore higher course fees apply and Advanced Learning Loans are available to help with course fees, please visit website for details.

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 5.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Dan Snow

Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow
BBC2, 9pm

For some Karl Pilkington types who might not embrace the glory of nature, the Grand Canyon is just a big rocky hole in the ground. For others it is one of the wonders of the world. Given that camera crews from around the globe spend a chunk of each year filming it, there's little wonder we are occasionally treated to another HD-friendly documentary like this. Here, occasional One Show reporter Dan Snow joins forces with a team of scientists and historians to emulate explorer John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Moving On. (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.45** Helicopter Heroes. **3.15** That Puppet Game Show. **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Dolphins – Spy in the Pod. (R) **5.35** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Countryfile. John Craven joins the staff of Killerton House in Devon as they prepare for the year ahead. He also views the home's antique clothing collection and presents items from past shows.

7.00 Celebrity Mastermind. With Fred MacAulay, Mark Billingham, Georgia Henshaw and Charles Collingwood.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. The experts gather at the home of the Royal Ballet School in Richmond Park, London. Objects include a longbow used in the Second World War and a sketch of Dylan Thomas's wife.

8.30 Sherlock. The brooding detective is kept busy as best man on John and Mary's wedding day – but it soon turns out his duties involve stopping a killer who is stalking the reception.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special. The doting mother gets a new house guest – a homeless parrot. (R)

11.05 Film: Good Will Hunting. (1997) Drama, with Matt Damon.

1.05 Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.10 Film:** Odette. (1950) **8.05** Monty Don's French Gardens. (R) **9.05** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.15** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the second day of the tournament. **5.00** Ski Sunday. **5.45 Film:** Catch Me If You Can. (2002) Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks.

8.00 Nature's Weirdest Events. Chris Packham investigates reports of bears turning to a life of crime and fish that have contrived a way to attack birds on land. Last in the series.

9.00 Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow. The presenter joins a team of historians and geologists to recreate the pioneering 280-mile journey undertaken around the natural wonder by explorer John Wesley Powell in 1869.

10.00 Charlie Brooker's 2013 Wipe. A satirical look back at the events of the past 12 months, which included the horse-meat scandal, the death of Margaret Thatcher and the US government shutdown. (R)

11.00 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the second day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green, featuring first-round matches in the men's and ladies' competitions.

11.50 Darts Extra. The BDO World Championships.

1.50 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.45** Holby City. (R) **3.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.15** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** FA Cup Football Highlights. (R) **10.55** The Unforgettable Leonard Rossiter. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.30** Live FA Cup Football. Nottingham Forest v West Ham United (Kick-off 12.00pm). **2.15** The Cube. (R) **3.15** Splash! (R) **4.45** The Celebrity Chase. With Sally Lindsay, Shaun Williamson, Barry McGuigan and Jenny Frost. (R) **5.45** Regional Programme ; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice. New series. Past contestants get their skates back on for the final series.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With Kimberley Walsh and Wayne Sleep.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. New series. A double elimination.

9.00 All New It'll Be Alright on the Night. TV bloopers, with Griff Rhys Jones.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 Birds of a Feather. ITV's revival of the hit BBC sitcom. (R)

10.45 FA Cup Football Highlights. Action from today's third-round matches.

11.45 Premiership Rugby Union. Action from the 12th round of top-flight fixtures.

12.40 The Store. **2.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **4.05** Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.30 Film: Barnyard. (2006) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30 Film:** Edward Scissorhands. (1990) Tim Burton's fantasy, starring Johnny Depp. **5.35** Channel 4 News.

6.05 Deal or No Deal. High-stakes game show, with Noel Edmonds.

7.00 Shipping Wars. Documentary following delivery firms that cater for the eBay generation, picking up and dropping off a wide range of complicated, seemingly un-shippable loads.

8.00 Speed with Guy Martin. For his second adrenaline-fuelled challenge, the racer tries to set the world record for riding a motorcycle on water, with the help of a Cambridge professor and marine engineers.

9.00 Film: Bad Teacher. (2011) Premiere. A cynical, hard-drinking teacher hopes to seduce a wealthy substitute, making an enemy of a squeaky-clean colleague. Comedy, starring Cameron Diaz and Justin Timberlake.

10.50 Rude Tube: Welcome to 2014. Alex Zane welcomes in the New Year with 100 internet clips. (R)

12.55 Film: Waltz with Bashir. (2008) Drama, directed by Ari Folman. **2.30** Coming Up. (R) **3.00** How Not to Get Old. (R) **3.55** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **4.50** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.45** Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **7.45** City of Friends. (R) **8.00** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Slugterra. **11.00** Jungle Babies: Tarsier Tails. (R) **11.30** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **12.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.30 Film:** Grounded. (2006) **3.15 Film:** Along Came Polly. (2004) **4.55 Film:** Made of Honor. (2008)

6.40 Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous. (2005) Comedy sequel, starring Sandra Bullock, Regina King and William Shatner. Edited for violence.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The ups and downs of life in the BB house as friendships and alliances are made, battle lines are drawn and arguments erupt.

10.00 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2013. Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.05** True CSI. **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 The Gruffalo **7.30** The Gruffalo's Child **7.55 Film:** 101 Dalmatians (1996) **9.30** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00 Film:** Starship Troopers (1997)

BBC Four
7.00 Britain by Bike **7.30** The Return of Colmcille **8.30** Apples, Pears and Paint: How to Make a Still Life Painting **10.00** Nigel Slater's Great British Biscuit **11.00 Film:** Elena (2011)

ITV2
2.00 Film: The Mighty Ducks (1992) **4.10 Film:** Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (2004) **6.05 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.00** You've Been Framed! **9.00** The Magaluf Weekender **10.00** I Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears' Road to Las Vegas **11.50 Film:** Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008)

ITV3
3.15 Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00 Film:** Changeling (2008) Fact-based drama, starring Angelina Jolie. **11.50** Cracker

ITV4
3.05 Film: Shalako (1968) **5.20 Film:** The Battle of Midway (1976) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00 Film:** Universal Soldier: Regeneration (2009) **11.00 Film:** The Matrix Reloaded (2003)

E4
3.50 Rude(ish) Tube **4.45 Film:** Grease (1978) **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992) **10.20** The Inbetweeners **11.30** 8 Out of 10 Cats

Film4
2.55 The Rugrats Movie (1999) **4.30** The Golden Compass (2007) **6.40** Crocodile Dundee II (1988) **8.50** 12 Years a Slave Interview Special **9.00** The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** 48 Hrs (1982)

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What's On!

Film Choices

Monday
Hellboy II: The Golden Army, ITV, 11.20pm
The demon superhero, aided by a team from the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defence, leads the fight against renegade elf Prince Nuada who is intent on reawakening an unstoppable robot army. Action fantasy sequel directed by Guillermo del Toro, starring Ron Perlman and Selma Blair. (2008)

Tuesday
Insomnia, BBC1, 11.15pm
A detective is sent to Alaska to investigate a murder during a month when the sun does not set. Sleep deprivation starts to take its toll, and he accidentally shoots his partner dead. He tries to cover it up, but the criminal they were hunting has seen everything and blackmails the cop into helping him escape justice. Thriller directed by Christopher Nolan, starring Al Pacino, Robin Williams and Hilary Swank. (2002)

Wednesday
Mimic, BBC1, 11.50pm
A scientist is shocked to discover a species of cockroach-hunting bug she created years earlier to eradicate a disease has evolved into the perfect killing machine. Horror from director Guillermo del Toro, starring Mira Sorvino, Jeremy Northam, Charles S Dutton and Alexander Goodwin. (1997)

Saw, Friday, Channel 4, 11.25pm

Thursday
Stolen Innocence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman is rushed to hospital after giving birth to a still-born girl, only to be accused by the police of murdering the child. Demanding to see the midwife who was treating her at home, she discovers the woman was an imposter and is certain her baby has been kidnapped. Thriller, starring Gina Philips and Ellie Harvie. (2007)

Friday
Saw, Channel 4, 11.25pm
Detectives hunt a killer who kidnaps his victims and forces them to play sadistic games with life-or-death consequences. Meanwhile, two strangers wake to find themselves chained to pipes in a filthy, derelict bathroom – and at the mercy of the madman. Horror, written by and starring Leigh Whannell, alongside Cary Elwes, Danny Glover and Dina Meyer. (2004)

The Majestic, ITV, 3am
A screenwriter in 1950s America becomes disillusioned with Hollywood when he falls victim to the communist witch-hunts of the era, and heads out for a drive – but a car crash leaves him suffering from amnesia and stranded in a small town, where he's mistakenly identified as a Second World War hero. Frank Darabont's drama, starring Jim Carrey. (2001)

Pick of the Week

Fighting to become the champion of champions

If something's going to end, it may as well go out with a bang, right? Clearly those in charge of **Dancing on Ice, ITV, Sunday, 6.15pm** think that, because this, the last-ever series of the celebrity talent show, will feature the good, the bad and the ugly from the previous eight runs.

So appearing alongside genuinely talented skaters such as reigning champ Beth Tweddle, Ray Quinn, Kyran Bracken, Suzanne Shaw and Sam Attwater will be Joe Pasquale and Todd Carty. Neither of them were voted out first during their series, but they were memorable for perhaps the wrong reasons – Todd Carty in particular.

Co-host Phillip Schofield has suggested that because everyone taking part already has some skating experience, we should see a higher standard this time.

"Human ability means that in past years, some people will concentrate, work harder and get better by the time they get to the series.

"Even if you didn't want it to be that way, there will be someone who will be head and shoulders above the rest, and you think, does that mean we already have a winner? And that's not always the case, obviously, but with something like this, everyone can already skate."

Hmmm... maybe he's forgotten Carty's spectacular time on the ice – or perhaps he knows something about the former EastEnder that we don't...

Schofield also can't wait to see the professionals in action again too.

"I'm often frustrated because you get to see a professional skater, maybe on a commercial break, or a show that they do that's not Dancing on Ice, and you look at the unbelievable ability that they have," he says.

"Then they come on our show, and for the first six weeks, they're pushing somebody around the ice who can't skate, and you never get to see really what they can do. So that might be something new this series, we get to know how good our professionals are a little bit more."

Although you might think that most of the nerves rest with the competitors, Schofield admits that there's a lot of pressure on him and Christine Bleakley to get things right too.

"It's the sort of show you don't want to muck up. I just don't like making mistakes, I never have.

"You want to get it right because as a presenter, you want to seamlessly get people from one place to another without your performance being the thing that distracted them – unless it's something you wanted to distract them with."

Quinn has already been installed as the bookies' favourite to lift the champion of champions trophy, but the aforementioned group of ex-series winners, as well as Bonnie Langford, Zaraah Abrahams, Jorgie Porter, David Seaman, Gareth Gates and Gary Lucy, might have something to say about that.

And who will face the disappointment of leaving the show first – something they would probably all prefer to avoid?

At least nobody will have long to wait to find out; the results show is broadcast later in the evening at 8.30pm, when the lowest-scoring celebrities perform crowd-pleasing routines from their original series in a battle for survival.

Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley host Dancing on Ice, ITV, 6.15pm

Best of the Rest

Monday
The Bletchley Circle
ITV, 9pm
Anna Maxwell Martin, Rachael Stirling, Sophie Rundle and Julie Graham make a welcome return as the code-breakers-turned-detectives, whose rather homespun yet brain-busting approach to catching criminals makes a welcome change to the cerebral cops and forensic experts we're used to seeing. Here, their Bletchley Park links come to the fore again when they help former colleague Alice Merren, who's been accused of murdering her former lover, John Richards, after being found standing over his corpse with a smoking gun in her hand. The outcome looks pretty bleak for Alice, until her friends learn that Richards had another woman in his life.

Tuesday
The Taste
Channel 4, 9pm
Okay so television isn't crying out for another cooking competition – we're hardly in short supply, after all. However, given the names attached to this latest effort, it might be worth a shot. Multi award-winning food writer Nigella Lawson is back on telly for the right reasons, and she is joined by critically acclaimed chef Ludo Lefebvre and food maverick Anthony Bourdain in her search to find the best chef who can impress with a single spoonful of food. First thing's first, and the mentors sample the cooking of 25 hopefuls, who range from amateurs to professionals from some of Britain's best restaurants – and with that one spoonful of food, they're fighting for a place on the show.

Wednesday
Waterloo Road
BBC1, 8.30pm
The locals had better watch out as there's a new girl on site, and while she leaves some pupils wide-eyed, she also creates a few problems for the long suffering staff. Gabriella Wark (Naomi Battrick, a veteran of Doctors and recent movie Blood) may be smart, sassy and stunning, but her disruptive behaviour has already led to her being expelled from several schools. And now she has her sights firmly set on attractive new PE teacher Hector (Leon Ockenden), she's clearly not about to become a shy and retiring student just yet. Meanwhile, newlywed Simon (Richard Mylan) kicks off his new Resilience Education scheme, and incurs the wrath of Christine (Laurie Brett).

Thursday
Birds of a Feather
ITV, 8.30pm
Cheerful Cockney molls Sharon (Pauline Quirke) and Tracey (Linda Robson) are back to wring more laughs from Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran's winning formula, this time with the aid of fellow writers Gary Lawson and John Phelps. Sharon now works for Dorien (Lesley Joseph) full-time, while Tracey, as sole breadwinner, is left to pay all the household bills. Dorien offers to dip into her savings for some rent, but gets a rude awakening when she contacts the bank and discovers all her finances are being used for legal fees. A desperate Sharon and Tracey take Dorien to a car boot sale to raise some much-needed funds, but how much will they get for her beloved designer collection?

The Bletchley Circle, Monday, ITV, 9pm

Benidorm
ITV, 9pm
Fresh from his guest appearance in The Spa's festive special, ex-Brookside star Philip Olivier pops up here as Jason Gallagher, who turns up at The Solano in the hope of landing a job. Seeing as he's easy on the eye, Joyce offers him a job – which leaves Mateo fuming. Can there really be room for two handsome hunks behind the bar? Mateo might be pleased about receiving a helping hand when Tiger and Michael's get-rich-quick scheme leads to mayhem at the venue, while Clive's mind is preoccupied with his daughter Bianca, who's been seen wandering through Alicante airport in tears.

Friday
Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Mary Berry
ITV, 9pm
Mary Berry can certainly hold her own in the Great British Bake Off kitchen, but we're about to see how she fares under harsh studio spotlights and on the receiving end of a good Piers Morgan grilling. The 78-year-old food writer and TV presenter is the latest familiar face to sit in the hot seat and take a detailed look back through her life and career. As she opens up to Piers, Mary will be discussing her family life (and talks discipline methods used when her children were growing up), her role in the much-adored Bake Off series, and cooking cow udder pie for her first TV appearance more than 40 years ago.

Italy Unpacked
BBC2, 9pm
Christmas, and all the guilty indulgences that come with it, is over for another year, and our thoughts are finally turning to our summer holiday, so Andrew Graham-Dixon and chef Giorgio Locatelli are embarking on another jaunt around beautiful Italy. They're beginning in Liguria, where the rocky mountains and rugged coastline once inspired English poets of the Romantic era. The pair also visit Genoa before heading on to Cinque Terre (meaning 'five lands') where they hop on a boat to explore the scattered villages. Next up, it's on to Tuscany, before they conclude this leg of the trip with a look around Pistoia, Pisa and Livorno.

The Graham Norton Show
BBC1, 10.35pm
Graham is joined by a quartet of movie stars tonight, headed up by Hollywood heavyweights Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone, who talk about their new boxing film Grudge Match. Comic actor Jonah Hill shares his experiences of working with Martin Scorsese on The Wolf of Wall Street.

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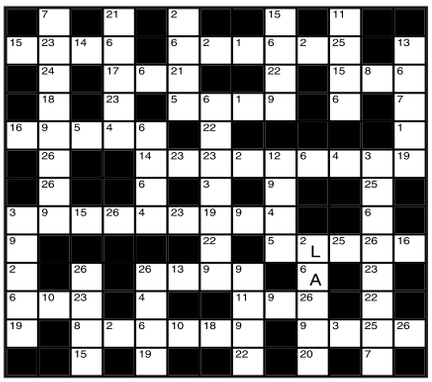
No.254

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



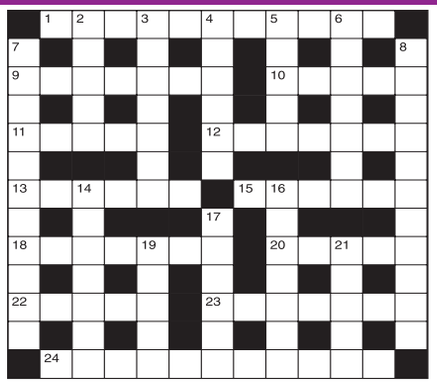
1	14
2 L	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6 A	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 N	2 O	3 H	4 F	5 G	6 D	7 I	8 K	9 C	10 V	11 M	12 L	13 S
14 W	15 B	16 A	17 Q	18 E	19 X	20 Z	21 J	22 T	23 Y	24 P	25 R	26 U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Skilled craftsmen? (11)
9. Game, and how to score in it (7)
10. People act foolishly in it (5)
11. Stone used to make an attack (5)
12. Birds I hide in a ship (7)
13. Attacked and bombed perhaps (6)
15. A colourless individual (6)
18. Take pains to produce inconvenience (7)
20. Vessel carrying fuel from Loire (5)
22. All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
23. Terminated the sitting, presumably (5,2)
24. Discerning writer and french sailor (11)

Down

2. Dislikes haste, perhaps (5)
3. Money from pirates (7)
4. Enjoy a flavour (6)
5. Presents one's natural talents (5)
6. Ends of routes vary in merit (7)
7. News being made? (11)
8. It records world-shaking events (11)
14. Rich fabric with an outstanding design (7)
16. The prospect for a guardsman (4-3)
17. Woolworker is something of a problem (6)
19. She's a new member of a union (5)
21. Like a ship taking a number to port (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Inconsiderate (11)
9. Dark cell (7)
10. Combine (5)
11. Deposit (5)
12. Paid up (7)
13. Strain (6)
15. Motive (6)
18. Envelop (7)
20. Come in (5)
22. Felony (5)
23. Odd (7)
24. Stocks and shares (11)

Down

2. Sharpened (5)
3. Unavailing (7)
4. Upright (6)
5. Confine (5)
6. Ambles (7)
7. Immaturity (11)
8. Starring part (7,4)
14. Disturbance (7)
16. Put to death (7)
17. Issue(6)
19. Corpulent (5)
21. Reliance (5)

Sudoku

3		9	7			4		
	2		6		9		5	8
	5		1					6
7			3					9
	1			6			4	
6			4		5			
1					3		9	
5			9		4		2	1
		4			6	5		

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	7	5	3	9	1	6	2	4
2	3	9	6	5	4	7	8	1
6	4	1	2	7	8	9	5	3
1	9	7	4	2	3	5	6	8
4	5	2	8	6	9	1	3	7
3	8	6	5	1	7	4	9	2
9	1	8	7	3	6	2	4	5
5	6	4	1	8	2	3	7	9
7	2	3	9	4	5	8	1	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: Across: 1 Penelope; 5 Spar; 9 Tsar; 10 Distinct; 11 Cache; 12 Illicit; 13 Dentist's chair; 18 Seafever; 19 Toss; 20 Animate; 21 Chair; 22 Nigh; 23 Skittles. Down: 2 Enslave; 3 Earshot; 4 Pain in the neck; 6 Panacea; 7 Rotator; 8 Italic; 13 Disdain; 14 Nearing; 15 Ice-man; 16 Hatchet; 17 Inspire. QUICK - Across: 1 Contempt; 5 Serf; 9 Alas; 10 Contract; 11 Equal; 12 Imitate; 13 Defectiveness; 18 Ceremony; 19 Eddy; 20 Initial; 21 Offer; 22 Ever; 23 Eyeglass. Down: 2 Oblique; 3 Testate; 4 Provisionally; 6 Emanate; 7 Fitness; 8 Strife; 13 Decline; 14 Furtive; 15 Commit; 16 Needful; 17 Sadness.

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Nissan's latest Qashqai redefining crossover

COMBINING innovation and exciting technology with intelligent design, the new Qashqai will build on the success of its two-million selling predecessor.

Yet despite setting new standards for technology, comfort and practicality, the Qashqai remains accessible to buyers considering a conventional hatchback or crossover. With prices starting from just £17,595, buyers can benefit from premium quality and some of the most advanced features on the market.

Nissan's philosophy of bringing premium features to the family car market is tried and tested. The exceptional success of the original model proves that buyers now expect Nissan to deliver sector-first innovations and fresh thinking in every key area.

The new Qashqai, on sale this month, is available in four familiar grades: Visia, Acenta, Acenta Premium and Tekna.

Visia models, priced from £17,595, come with a range of new features including automatic air conditioning, hill start assist, a five-inch colour HD infotainment screen, chassis control, TPMS (tyre pressure monitoring system) and speed limiter/cruise control all fitted as standard.

Acenta models continue the generous theme with a further list of premium features fitted as standard.

Priced from £19,145, these include dual-zone automatic air conditioning, premium leather steering wheel and gear knob, 17-inch alloy wheels and a luggage board system. Safety equipment includes front fog lamps, auto headlamps and rain-sensing wipers.

Both the Visia and Acenta models come with the option of a smart vision pack (£450) that adds Nissan's advanced safety shield system among other driver aids. Designed to enhance the safety of occupants, the pack incorporates front collision avoidance and traffic tign recognition.

Acenta Premium models start from £20,995 and feature a raft of comfort and safety technologies. These include new-generation NissanConnect infotainment system with DAB radio. A rear view camera is also fitted as standard, along with i-key start push button, parking sensors and a panoramic glass roof. Safety features include front collision avoidance, high beam assist and lane departure warning.

Technologies

Range-topping Tekna models – which start from £23,145 – feature an array of new-to-sector technologies that further highlight Nissan's lead in the crossover market. For safety, Tekna models benefit from Bi-LED headlamps, Safety Shield with Traffic Signal Recognition and High Beam Assist.

Tekna models also excel when it comes to design and technology features. All models are equipped with 19-inch alloy wheels, roof rails, part-leather seats, a large glass roof, heated seats, front and rear parking sensors and Intelligent key with engine start button.

The latest-generation NissanConnect system is also standard, including a seven-inch touchscreen display, DAB digital radio, Around View Monitor and smartphone connectivity.

A range of supremely efficient and refined petrol and diesel engines allows the new Qashqai to exceed the expectations of drivers no matter which powertrain is chosen. The line-up consists of four engines: two petrol and two diesel, with the option of two- or four-wheel-drive. Customers can also choose between manual and all-new Xtronic automatic transmissions.

Driving through a six-speed manual transmission, the entry-level 1.2 DIG-T delivers 115PS and generates 190Nm of torque. Despite its modest size, the 1.2-litre engine packs a real punch, offering sharper acceleration and greater flexibility than the outgoing 1.6-litre naturally aspirated engine.

Its lower weight and more fuel-efficient operation also mean it is considerably cleaner and more economical than the model it replaces. The 1.2 DIG-T engine emits 129g/km of CO (15g/km less than the outgoing 1.6-litre petrol unit), and has a fuel consumption figure of 50.4mpg.

Like all engines in the new Qashqai range, the 1.2 DIG-T is equipped with start/stop ignition as standard.

Set to join the Qashqai range in autumn 2014, the most powerful petrol engine will be the 1.6 DIG-T engine with 150PS.

There are sector-first innovations and fresh thinking in key areas of the new Qashqai

With 240Nm of torque on offer, the 1.6 DIG-T delivers impressive low and mid-range pull, with excellent in-gear flexibility. Yet despite its strong performance, the range-topping petrol option retains impressive efficiency. Fuel consumption is 50.4mpg on the EU combined cycle, while COemissions are 132g/km.

The latest evolution of the award-winning 1.5 dCi 110PSdirect injection diesel engine is the cleanest and most fuel-efficient engine ever offered in a Qashqai with CO emissions of just 99g/km and an EU combined fuel consumption figure of just 74.3mpg.

The sixth-generation 1.5-litre dCi unit is smoother, more efficient and more refined than the outgoing engine. Thanks to a substantial re-engineering programme, the 1.5-litre dCi engine offers greater in-gear flexibility thanks to a 20Nm increase in torque.

Advanced

Positioned at the top of the Qashqai's diesel range, the 1.6 dCi 130PSis offered with the option of two- and four-wheel-drive. This unit is one of the most advanced diesel powerplants in its sector, with a number of technical innovations designed to maximise fuel consumption and reduce CO emissions.

In two-wheel-drive manual form, the 1.6 dCi has CO emissions of 115g/km and an EU combined fuel consumption figure of 64.2mpg. The Xtronic automatic version emits 119g/km and returns 61.4mpg, while the four-wheel-drive manual version has figures of 129g/km and 57.6mpg. Redesigned from the ground up, the new Qashqai has been created to meet the demands and expectations of next-generation crossover buyers.

Your essential guide to the world of motoring

New Generation i10

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Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for New Generation i10 range: Urban 35.3 (8.0) – 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1) – 76.3 (3.7), Combined 45.6 (6.2) – 65.7 (4.3), CO2 Emissions 142 – 98 g/km. Fuel consumption figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results.
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Greenhous DAF going green with solar panels

GREENHOUS has further enhanced its green credentials with the recent installation of solar panels at the DAF Willenhall site.

The Shropshire and West Midlands based Motor Group has reinforcedit-seco-friendly reputation once again with this latest development.

The solar panels were supplied by Loryan Renewable Engineering, based in Stafford, and more than 170, 285w Neon LG solar modules were installed at the Greenhous Willenhall depot. The system will generate a huge 44,000 kwhr per year and will power a large proportion of the sites energy usage.

Wayne Fletcher, service director at Greenhous DAF Willenhall, said: "As a large company, we are very aware of our carbon footprint and the use of our energy resources. We have been doing everything we can in recent years to reduce our impact on the environment.

Energy

"Prior to the solar panels, we went through the process of looking at our energy usage in order to work out how best to reduce it. Subsequently, we changed the lighting system throughout the whole site including parts, workshop and offices by fitting low energy light units that rely on sensors.

"Having done this, we felt the next step for us in continuing our eco-development was to introduce solar panels. Having such a big premises with a large energy consumption, it made sense for us to consider generating our own energy, not just to remain eco-friendly but also to save money."

Suppliers of the panels were Loryan Renewable Engineering, a company founded by experienced engineers that delivers bespoke renewable engineering solutions for the agricultural, commercial, industrial and domestic sectors.

Lee Naylor, of Loryan, and DAF service director Wayne Fletcher

The company prides itself on being one of the few specialist renewable engineering installers in the UK market with the ability to cater for all green energy needs. They offer tailored, bespoke engineered solutions that range from preliminary consultancy to installation and future service.

Lee Naylor, managing director of Loryan, said: "It is great that Greenhous are so keen to make changes to the way they operate in order to reduce their impact on the environment. We have a strong company ethos that reflects this and it has been a pleasure providing a successful solar installation for another likeminded company."

Wayne concluded: "We are really pleased with how the solar panels have turned out. The installation has made a real impact on our energy usage as well as the amount of money we are spending. In the first three months that the system has been operating, we have saved the equivalent CO2 as travelling over 21,000 kilometres in a car or planting 83 trees.

"It is great to know that we are doing our bit to help the environment and we will always continue looking for ways to improve our carbon footprint throughout the company."

Shot in arm for electric vehicles from BMW i3

THE i3 is a big deal, not just for BMW but also for the electric car industry.

Boasting an innovative approach to design, construction and its underlying technology, this could be the car to give the electric car market the shot in the arm it needs to make the move from niche to mainstream status.

To date, early adopters have helped drive interest in electric transport. BMW is clearly keen to tap into this buyer demographic; witness the i3's futuristic looks and the car-maker's efforts at community building with a comprehensive smartphone app that can remotely monitor your pride and joy.

The bottom line is a carbon composite shell wrapped in funky-looking panels and room for four inside the radically styled, by current standards, cabin. Wood trim blends well with the car's exposed composite shell and the liberal use of natural fibres for door panels and the top of the fascia.

Thankfully

Still, this window dressing would all be for nought if the i3 failed to deliver the goods in the real world. Thankfully it's not, as the electric BMW offers possibly the most rounded driving and ownership experience to date. Granted, progress is rapid in the electric car sector, but the i3 behaves more, well, car-like than most.

Interestingly, BMW has retained its trademark rear-wheel drive layout for the i3. At a whisker under four metres, it's a genuine compact car, and this is reflected in its agility around town and its Black Cab-rivalling turning circle. The i3's narrow section tyres also play a part, plus they contribute towards the car's slippery aerodynamic properties. With BMW's clean-sheet approach to design comes the ability to place the batteries, a 230kg slab of lithium-ion power, under the car's flat floor. This ensures maximum occupant space in the cabin, a decent size boot and a positive effect on the car's handling. The 170 horsepower electric motor also plays a significant part in the i3's overall performance.

BMW's i3 has an innovatve approach to design, construction and technology

And you can't talk about batteries without covering the practicalities of range. BMW previously conducted detailed research with volunteers and fleets of electric 1 Series and Mini models to observe driver behaviour.

As you'd expect, although the mainly urban journeys were frequent, they were short. With that in mind, a real world range of around 100 miles isn't so bad.

Although different eco-centric driving modes can be selected to maximise driving range, the i3's in-built brake regeneration properties can return a meaningful amount of charge to the battery over the course of a journey.

You need to lay off the brake pedal though, as simply easing off the throttle at urban speeds is enough to bring the i3 to a steady yet prompt halt. While that's happening, the i3's battery is getting a small but useful top up. Conversely, lean hard on the throttle and you can experience a 1 Series diesel level of brisk acceleration.

The ability to drive almost exclusively using just one pedal aside, the i3 delivers a surprisingly conventional driving experience.

Largely familiar controls, a lofty driving position, good visibility and a high level of refinement go a long way to justifying the car's premium price tag and ensuring its place within the BMW family.

Of course, the financial aspect of the car should be equally appealing. The absence of road tax and fuel liabilities rank high alongside the ability to charge the car for very little – overnight via a domestic electricity supply, and a matter of hours when connected to a high output wall box or public recharging point.

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Mirage range fuel consumption in mpg (ltrs/100km): Urban 56.5 - 61.4 (5.0 - 4.6), Extra Urban 72.4 - 78.5 (3.9 - 3.6), Combined 65.7 - 68.9 (4.3 - 4.1), CO₂ Emissions 100 - 95g/km.
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12/61 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi 130 SE Nav 5dr as seen on TV 61 PLATE

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11/61 Citroen C4 Grand Picasso 2.0 HDi VTR+ as seen on TV 61 PLATE

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Newest car brand may be ready to come of age

By Matt Kimberley

INFINITI has only been a separate company from its parent Nissan brand for a little more than a year now. And Infiniti cars have only been built at all since 1989.

Undeterred, the firm is going up against some of the toughest opposition in the car market in the mighty shapes of Audi, BMW and Mercedes, who dominate the European premium car market almost completely.

The Q50 is the spearhead with which Infiniti wants to give the big Germans a poking on their home turf. It's sharply styled and easy on the eye in either of the body styles. Sport trim looks surprisingly different from the front when you put it next to a more relaxed Premium-spec car, but in isolation both look strikingly – refreshingly – different to what's already out there. It's sized in between BMW's 3 Series and 5 Series, so it might just be a great catch-all compromise.

The interior design is good, too, with a large centre console giving a snug, comfortable feel to a cabin that isn't as open and spacious-seeming as some thanks to a windscreen and A-pillar sitting closer to the occupants than in rival cars. The console itself is dominated by two vertically stacked large screens; the top one recessed slightly into the surface and tasked with displaying the navigation system readout and visuals from the manoeuvring cameras (front and rear). Unfortunately this screen is tilted back significantly enough to be prone to glare, especially since it's not angled towards the driver in any way. If the sun is coming through the passenger side window it can be hard to see parts of the navigation readout.

The lower screen, mounted flush with the console and topped with a smooth, glossy plastic cover, is effectively the touch-screen control panel via which the driver can adjust the myriad settings and personalisation options. It is rather vulnerable to fingerprints, but it's quick to respond to touch and offers a clear, crisp app-style layout that anyone with a smartphone should feel right at home with.

Economical

Cabin storage is a mixed bag, with short-ish door pockets but a big central bin, which also houses two 12-volt power outlets, two USB ports, a 3.5mm jack and even a 'video in' socket to pipe pictures to the top screen – but not while you're driving.

Speaking of driving, you can have the Q50 as a diesel, which borrows Mercedes's slightly clattery but potentially very economical 2,143cc four-cylinder engine, or as a petrol-electric hybrid that uses the electric motor as a 'supercharger'. It works like a charm, too, giving the Q50S (the hybrid's special designation) an instant swell of torque low down in the rev range before the 3.5-litre V6 takes over to pump the overall power output to 360bhp.

In this guise the car excels in slow traffic under gentle throttle inputs, where the engine can switch off altogether until the battery is depleted. With the air conditioning on, though, the engine quite often has to keep cutting back in to power the auxiliary systems.

The rear-wheel drive version of the Q50S is a very fine steer on twisty roads, too, where a genuinely adjustable and composed chassis shines through, thanks in part to the clever Direct Adaptive Steering (DAS), which in a world-first move isn't connected to the front wheels by any mechanical means. It's completely fly-by-wire, like a fighter jet, which means the steering responsiveness can be customised to how the driver wants it. It works brilliantly, giving an increased measure of control and a greater sense of confidence, flattering a driver but also giving them the green light to exploit the wealth of talent it has.

There are some small niggles with the new Q50, like the sat-nav screen's glare issue, but it's thoroughly enjoyable to drive. It cruises effortlessly, looks arguably much more stylish than the alternatives and feels solid. Infiniti's customer service is reportedly somethingspecial, too, and you get the feeling that the youngest premium car manufacturer out there might be about to come of age.

Bumper to bumper

Model: Infiniti Q50S, from £40,000 on the road
Engine: Fully enclosed 3.5-litre V6 petrol-electric hybrid system producing 360bhp and 403lb.ft
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Winter tyres have a different rubber compound and tread pattern to summer tyres to improve road grip, braking distance and traction in cold, wet and wintry conditions

Winter tyre sales up on 2012

SALES of cold weather tyres have seen another consecutive annual increase despite the recent mild autumn, according to UK tyre fitting and supply specialist Hometyre.

Hometyre, which covers Shropshire, the West Midlands and 20 other geographic areas of the UK, says its sales of winter tyres are up by 25 per cent on this time last year. Richard Woodward, operator for Hometyre West Midlands, said: "We've noticed that motorists are planning ahead and preparing for a cold winter. Forecasters have warned of a potentially severe winter and sales have been steadily increasing since October. Last year many motorists were caught out when stocks sold out after heavy snow and ice caused a last minute scramble for cold weather tyres.

"All suppliers increased their stock levels this year to meet another expected rise in demand, but even taking that into account, stocks have been depleting quickly."

A run of harsh UK winters since 2010 has led to a year-on-year increase in demand for cold weather tyres as motorists become more aware of the safety benefits of switching to them for 5-6 months of the year.

In northern Europe motorists routinely switch to cold weather tyres to improve their safety on the road from October right through to March or April.

Winter tyres not only make driving safer in snow and ice, their different construction and tread pattern means they perform better in cold weather overall by improving braking distances, road grip and traction in temperatures of 7C and below. They can still be driven in temperatures up to 20C.

Mr Woodward said that if drivers did not wish to make the switch, they should still prepare for the cold months ahead by regularly checking that their existing tyres are in good condition with at least a tread depth of 3mm. "Although the legal tread depth limit is just 1.6mm, to ensure adequate grip in wet and wintry conditions, it's advisable that tyres be run to an absolute minimum depth of 3mm during the winter," he said.

Be clear on taking extra care while driving in fog

Driving in foggy conditions can be dangerous and extra care should be taken while travelling during winter

FOG is one of the most difficult conditions to drive in, warns Institute of Advanced Motoring chief examiner Peter Rodger.

As we head for the midde of winter Mr Rodger is calling motorists to make sure they are prepared so they can carry out journeys safely.

Before setting off, clean your windows and windscreen and ensure all lights are working. Clean the inside of the screen as well – it helps prevent it misting up, the last thing you need when it's already foggy outside.

Switch the heater or air conditioning on and leave it running to keep the inside of the glass clear.

Aircon helps dry the air – on a foggy day it can really help. Use windscreen wipers on an intermittent setting to keep the screen clear too.

When ready to leave, switch on the dipped headlights. Use fog lights if visibility is less than 100 metres, but don't forget to switch them off when visibility improves.

Daylight

Drivers should not rely on the car's daylight running lights – they may not put the back lights on.

Slow down and keep enough distance between yourself and the vehicle in front – make sure you can stop safely within the distance you can see clearly.

Fog is not the same density all the time – when it gets thicker, slow down.

Brake gently but earlier than usual so your brake lights warn drivers behind.

Drivers should be aware other vehicles may be travelling without their lights on, and pedestrians and cyclists will be hard to see anyway, so extra care and attention is needed.

At junctions, wind the window down and listen for traffic. If you have electric windows, open the passenger one to listen that way as well.

Straining to see through thick fog will quickly bring on tiredness so take regular breaks.

Don't overtake a queue on the dual carriageway, and expect it to be as clear in front of it.

The queue will have cleared the fog where it is, and you will hit a wall of thicker fog at the front.

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***The service offer is only applicable to eligible Volvo XC90 / XC60 / S60 / V60 / V40 / V40CC / S80 / V70 / XC70 (excluding S60, V60 and V70 Business Editions and V60 Plug-in Hybrid) vehicles ordered in the customer's name on or after 1st October up to and including 31st December 2013. The services must be carried out in the United Kingdom at a Volvo Authorised Repairer by Volvo Approved Technicians at the correct competence level. 5 year offer: The retail service is for 5 years or 62.5k miles (D2 engines), 90K miles (all other engines), whichever occurs first and includes 5 services at a cost to the customer of £500 incl. VAT (£416.67 ex VAT). The retail offer is only available for purchase at any time up to 1 month after car registration, and as long as the vehicle meets the appropriate conditions. Services must be carried out in line with manufacturers service schedules as per VIDA (copies of which are available on request), which may be updated from time to time according to manufacturer's instructions. Services should be undertaken in line with the time and mileage intervals specified in the Volvo Service Handbook supplied with the car. The service offer includes parts and labour for all scheduled services. Owners are responsible for topping up the various fluids and coolant in between services. Wear and tear items such as brake pads, discs, bulbs, wiper blades, tyres and brake fluid are not included. The service offer is not available on vehicles that have undergone any form of aftermarket unapproved tuning or performance enhancement and excludes all non-scheduled service work and accident damage. The service offer is transferable to subsequent owners of the car but not transferable to another car. No refund is available if the services are not used. Volvo reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time.

*Official fuel consumption figures are obtained in accordance with Directive 93/116/EC as amended by 1999/100/EC. The figures are obtained under controlled test conditions and as such consumption achieved on the road will not necessarily accord with the official test results. Factors including driving styles and road, car and weather conditions will also have a bearing on actual fuel consumption achieved. ** When funded through a personal contract purchase agreement.

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Boxing Day, Thursday 26	Closed
Friday, December 27	8.30am - 6pm
Saturday, December 28	Closed
Monday, December 30	8.30am - 6pm
New Years Eve, Tuesday 31	8.30am - 2pm
New Years Day, Wednesday 1	Closed
Thursday, January 2	8.30am - 6pm
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6 Property

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7 Jobs

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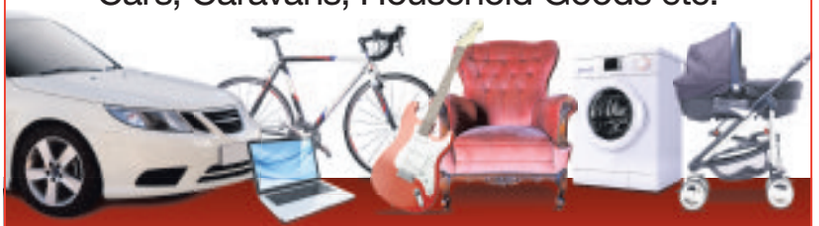

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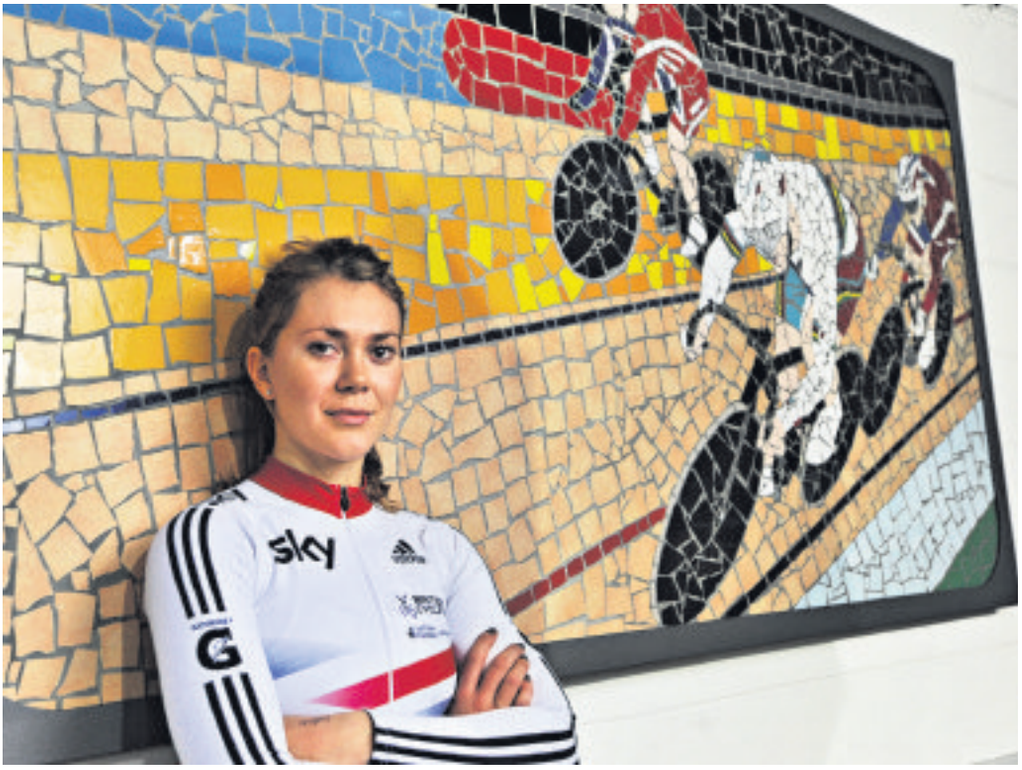

Jess Varnish has her sights set on becoming world champion after battling back from an injury that kept her out for six months

Jess Varnish celebrating a gold medal with Victoria Pendleton in the team sprint in 2012

Bikes, pain and 200 camels

AS an athlete Jess Varnish may be worth her weight in gold but in Marrakesh it seems her price is considerably lower.

"I almost got sold, some guy wanted to buy me for 200 camels," she says. "I think it was because I've got blonde hair. He was going to my mum: 'Is this your daughter?' and mum was like 'yeah' and he replied: 'She should come and live with me for 200 camels.' I was like 'get me out of here now'."

Varnish laughs as she recalls the trip with mum Helen in February, designed to take her mind off the back injury which kept her out for almost six months.

It capped almost 18 months of pain for the Halesowen cyclist following her Olympic disqualification from the team sprint final with Victoria Pendleton in 2012.

The back problem literally added injury to the insult, but silver in the team sprint at the Mexico World Cup with Becky James recently proved her quality.

It added to her team sprint, match sprint, 500m time trial and keirin titles at the National Championships in November – and two bronze medals at the European Championships a month earlier. It allows Varnish to be remarkably philosophical when we meet as the 23-year-old swings her feet over the seat in front of her at the Velodrome in Manchester.

Winning

"The Olympics didn't change me, it doesn't define me being an Olympic champion or winning a medal," says Varnish.

"The injuries probably define me more than the Olympics, because you have to do it on your own.

"Nobody – apart from the people who are really close to you – understands. You have to get on with it yourself.

"I wasn't naive, but I thought nothing bad was ever going to happen. I never thought I'd be restricted with what I could do. It's probably good it's happened, in a way.

"If I got disqualified in the World final I would be gutted, but nothing would ever be as bad as the Olympics. I would be really sad, but I'd get on with it.

"The Olympics is something you've been training for all your life, for this one thing, and then very quickly it's gone.

"It doesn't even mean anything. The injury has put things into perspective. A few months ago I would have been happy going to Mexico just to do anything."

We touch further on the Olympics, but there is little else Varnish can say. She was the only competing member of the British cycling track team not to win a medal in London last summer.

She and Pendleton were disqualified in the team sprint when they were guaranteed silver and would probably have won gold. The nation saw her distraught as Pendleton held her in the Velodrome, the chance of a medal gone, and she has moved on.

There is a World Championship to think about in February in Cali, Colombia, but it's a goal Varnish doubted she would make after such a turbulent year.

A backache on a training camp in Australia in January developed into a more serious problem and left her fearing missing another season. The mundane chores of cleaning and shopping – let alone continuing her career – were put on hold.

And the seriousness of the problem was revealed with a simple sneeze.

"Don't even talk to me about that," she says, still wincing with the memory. "It had been coming on for months. When I was in Australia, I could feel it every day and I just wanted to get home.

"I had an injection and it was an epidural so it had to go into the discs. The needle is long and you go in and out of a scanner when it's in your back. They said: 'That should do it,' but in my mind it was still there. It felt OK, but when you're hurt your body just knows.

"Then one day I was doing a lift in the gym and it just went. I started crying, and I never thought I'd cry in the gym. I thought I'd broken it, I couldn't walk, couldn't bend down or anything.

"And when I got home I sneezed – oh my God! I dropped to the floor in pain – my legs just went.

"Liam (Phillips – Varnish's boyfriend and UCI BMX World Champion) wasn't in the room but I was like 'Liam, what the hell just happened?' My body was out of control; it was bizarre and really scary. Now I've got to sneeze with my mouth open – and just get my germs everywhere. I have to, just because of paranoia."

Varnish had torn the L5/S1 disc in her lower back with fluid leaking out of the disc and surgery or enforced rest were the only options.

She chose rest and only managed to return to concerted training in July, nearly six months after the initial problems.

It was the first injury of her career – give or take a day or two off – and in an honest and vulnerable moment left her questioning a return to the top.

"I wasn't thinking about retiring, but I didn't think I'd be able to come back as before," she says."Every time I was on the bike it was hurting and I didn't want to do it for the rest of my life with pain. There would be no enjoyment.

"I'd go on my rollers in the morning or on a gym bike but I couldn't bend over. I'd just be in pain and how was I meant to put power down in this position?

"The idea of doing a start made me want to cry. Your back is central so everywhere felt awful, I had pain in my legs, everywhere.

"I'd worked so hard to put on muscle and get stronger and more powerful but I came back and everyone was saying I'd wasted away.

"I couldn't do anything to keep the muscle there, I lost 7kg just of muscle.

"It's bizarre because people would think you'd get fat, but I just lost it. I felt awful and weak and thinking: 'How I am ever going to get back to do this?'After the time off I'd come back to the track and train and it would hurt, so they'd just send me home. It was one step forward and two steps back all the time."

Varnish blames the lack of down time after the Games for her injury, believing her body could not cope after the demands of preparing for London 2012.

She had just two weeks off in an attempt to ride herself out of the disappointment but admits, in future, she will ask British Cycling chiefs for more rest.

"We never ever get a break. Looking back I'm really going to push to have that time because if I'd had more time off after the Olympics, I don't think I'd have been injured," she says.

"I came back too early, 100 per cent. I had a couple of weeks off, but I wanted to do it for myself because of what happened at the Games. I wanted to get back into it myself to prove I was still in good shape.

"Your body can't do it at the end of the day – so I ended up having to have five months off.

"Vicky put a lot of things in perspective and then Chris Hoy got in touch to say that, although things might seem horrible, I was doing the right thing and I would get back into the sport.

"To be encouraged by two people who had been through it all was wonderful."

Varnish cracks another smile, joking about her own misfortune. But when it comes to her return, she is focused.

China's Lee Wai Sze has built on her bronze in the keirin at London 2012 and team sprint world and Olympic champions, Germany's Kristina Vogel and Miriam Welte – who beat Varnish and James in Mexico – are chief threats. And even though she and James were under China's old world record time set at London 2012, they were still second in Aguascalientes recently.

So does Varnish, who immediately lost the team sprint world record she set with Pendleton at London 2012 to China in the very next race, need to get faster?

"Yep," she says matter-of-factly. "Everyone has got faster, which is great because it shows the sport is going in the right direction.

"But now isn't the time to be the fastest in the world, we've got until February to get into that place.

"I've needed that time after having such a long time off of not being able to do anything. I'm happy to be where I've got back to after just four months back on the bike.

"I have raced more this year than I ever have done in a year. It's bizarre but it's really good, it's helped me.

"I don't see I'm on the radar now, I just want to go to each training session and commit to it.

"I just feel I want to be fast on my bike because nothing else matters. There's a whole other world out there of people I've got to beat. I see it as a bigger picture."

That comes from her time on the sidelines, watching, struggling with pain and plotting her eventual return.

Cycling champion Jess Varnish

It is an ongoing situation with Varnish admitting she must manage her back carefully to ensure she doesn't suffer again.

Her training has changed, incorporating more pilates, as the Worlds and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow this summer loom. "I don't think it's going to be gone ever," says Varnish, who began track cycling at an early age and was selected to join British Cycling's Olympic Development Programme in 2005, making selection a year ahead of her age group.

"It's always going to be something I'll have to manage – and want to manage.

"It could come back at any time and I want to keep my body healthy for as long as possible. I'm 23 and hopefully have a long career ahead of me.

"It was such a bad injury; I don't want anything like that again. I'll always be aware of it and I'll always do rehab and pilates.

"That's what I've started to do because of my back. I've had to change in the gym, I can't do some lifts which I used to do because of the load on the disc.

"I will be able to do them at some point. You have to do one exercise at a time, then put weight on.

Lifting

"I'm really happy with what I can do compared to not doing anything. I'm lifting more than I thought I'd be able to do."

There's no frustration now, though, even after watching sprint partner James take gold in the keirin and sprint at the World Track Championships in Minsk in February.

The pair, who grew up together in the British Cycling programme, were in Pendleton's shadow.

But there is no battle to become the sport's new golden girl. "We are really good friends, we've been doing the same training, have pushed ourselves and raced together at the World Cup," says Varnish, who also rides for Team V-Sprint Racing, which was founded by dad Jim, a former National and World Cycle Speedway champion.

"I didn't get the icing on the cake at the Worlds because I was in good shape apart from my back, but Becky got all the rewards from it.

"It wasn't my time. Becky has had her injuries, I was happy it all came together."

Varnish dreams about being world champion and emulating James – the closest she has come was team sprint silver in 2011 – something she thought she would have to put on hold for another year.

But after overcoming her demons, on and off the track, it is a realistic aim in February.

The scars have healed and Varnish is happy to the point where she apologises for talking about things too much. It has been a long road, but something which has left her fearless. "I'd never been injured before," she says.

"Maybe I'd have to miss one session because a muscle was tight, but I've never been injured.

"Looking back it's gone quickly to where I am now but it was horrible at the time. Each day dragged. I couldn't do anything. I just appreciate things more now. I appreciate being able to get on my bike and perform to 100 per cent after not being able to for so long.

"It's never been taken away from me, I've not had any limitations before.

"Even talking about it, you know you should appreciate every day of being able to be on the bike. It sounds stupid.

"It has been horrible, but now I've come out the other side of it and hopefully going to be successful. So I think nothing can ever be as bad as what's happened.

"What else could be as bad? I'm just not scared now."

Woffinden signs new deal with Wolves

Tai Woffinden

Speedway

TAI WOFFINDEN has agreed a new deal with Wolverhampton Speedway Club.

World Champion Woffinden, who is away on a skiing trip, finalised terms with Wolves owner Chris Van Straaten after weeks of negotiations.

But he says it wasn't the financial side of the deal which held things up.

"When the promoters met and expanded the fixture list for next season it caused me a massive headache," he said.

"And it did look like I would miss out on British Speedway for a while there, I was gutted about it because I know what the reaction would have been.

"But I'm delighted to have everything finalised and I'm looking forward to the new season and it's a great feeling to be back with Wolverhampton. My training is going well, I'm doing a lot of physical work at high altitude and it's great to be out here in the alps on this trip. I'm feeling stronger and stronger and I'm going to be fitter than ever when the season starts."

Van Straaten, meanwhile, is delighted to get his man back on board.

"I'm relieved and delighted to have Tai back with us for next season, it's fabulous news for Wolverhampton and British Speedway in general to have the world champion riding here," he said.

"It's taken a little longer than I would have liked because, naturally, Tai has a lot on his plate and lots to consider.

"He is also looking at the best way to make maximum use of the fact that he is world champion and early in the new year we will also be looking to bring in some sponsorship to help with his British racing.

"It's a massive plus for us to have the best rider in the world at Wolverhampton and I am delighted we have been able to make it happen.

"He was pivotal to our team plans, we knew the signing of Tai would dictate which way our team building would go and we now know what we are left with for the last two places.

"I'm confident we can have the team finalised in the next couple of days and we are in for an exciting season I'm sure."

Double act prove their worth to derail Crewe

Wolves 2 Crewe 0

STILL Carl Ikeme continues to be every bit as important as Leigh Griffiths. Still the opposition is contained rather than dominated.

Still Molineux watches its football with a blend of optimism and censure. But still Wolves remain on course for the promotion the club craves.

by Martin Swain

Despite a spirited display that deserved more than to drop Crewe to the bottom of the table, they were undone by goals at each end of a generally even contest, initially from Michael Jacobs and finally from top scorer Griffiths.

There was a significant response from the Scot to the 90th-minute goal that finally tamed Crewe's search for an equaliser.

Pointing sternly to his club badge, he seemed to be ticking off those supporters who have taken to the social networks to question his commitment and endeavour.

The first goal perhaps summed up the entire campaign for Wolves. Jacobs, cutting across Crewe's back line, found Cassidy, who played in Scott Golbourne as he charged down the left flank. By the time a tempting cross had reached the back post, Jacobs had made up the ground to head home with barely three minutes played.

But Wolves have flattered to deceive in any number of false starts to matches this season and this proved another. Industrious Crewe were frustrated by the goalkeeping of Ikeme, a continuing theme throughout a promotion challenge built on Wolves' uneven form.

Ikeme's best save came eight minutes after the restart, a one-on-one with Tom Hitchcock.

Crewe keeper Ben Garratt had the save of the match as he flung himself to his right to palm a header from Griffiths.

The cross from Henry that had provided the chance said everything about the qualities he and Jacobs have added to Wolves and when the combination was repeated in the last minute, Garratt could do nothing to prevent Griffiths lashing home the winger's service.

Rotherham United 3 Wolves 3

IT was a fitting comeback Ol' Blue Eyes would have been proud of.

Frank Sinatra, whose New York anthem blasted out of this excellent new stadium to welcome the teams before kick-off, was almost as famous for his comebacks as his legendary crooning.

And Wolves certainly did it their way at the extravagantly-titled ground – even if they rode their luck somewhat. The Rotherham manager Steve Evans, enraged by the award of the penalty to Wolves, claimed the decision changed the game.

He was right; at 3-1 down and with Wolves struggling to contain Rotherham, there didn't seem to be a way back for the visitors.

One bludgeoning blast from Bakary Sako's left foot later and Wolves were back in business. At 3-1 down it looked as if Wolves were heading for a third straight defeat, even after Danny Batth had given them a ninth minute lead.

Former Wolves loanee Nouha Dicko became the latest ex-player to remind his old club what they are missing as he twice pierced their rearguard to score for the Millers. In between Kieran Agard climbed above Golbourne to plant a towering far-post header in the opposite corner of the net.

But Wolves luck turned when the Premier League's youngest referee Michael Oliver awarded them the 59th-minute spot kick for handball against Claude Davis. Sako rifled home and, five minutes later, Henry gloriously dispatched the equaliser.

Leigh Griffiths celebrates after scoring his 13th goal of the season in Wolves' 2-0 Boxing Day win over Crewe

Swimmers making a splash at contest

A WOLVERHAMPTON school's swimming club has returned from a recent championship with a haul of medals.

Members of the Royal School Swimming Club won nine gold, four silver and six bronze medals in the Midland Short Course Championships at Stafford Leisure Centre .

Noteable performances came from Alice Dearing in the 400 and 800 freestyle.

She won both events with a new senior regional record of 8.42.03 in the 800.

Megan Carline also swam an excellent 800 best by six seconds and became only the third swimmer from The Royal to swim under nine minutes in the 800 freestyle, coming home in 8.59.67.

Tom Derbyshire set three regional records during his 1,500 metre swim.

Dan Fogg, London 2012 Olympian in this event, helped Tom set off to a blistering 800 split of 8.14.74 which set new West Midlands Junior and Senior records.

Tom finished the race second in the senior age group behind Dan but won the junior title in a new West Midland Junior record of 15.31.90, smashing the old record of 16.7 by 36 seconds.

Casey Barrett swam a new best time of 16.10.44 and finished second in the junior age group and sixth in the Senior Age Group aged only 14.

Toby Robinson, who was fourth in the senior age group, achieved a new best time of 15.43.54.

Courtney Price won the junior 100, 200 backstroke and 100 butterfly all in new best times.

A hat-trick for skipper

AFC Wulfs 5 Rocester 1

A HAT-TRICK from skipper Jake Sedgemore helped AFC Wulfrunians romp to victory in a Midland Alliance game they dominated.

Sedgemore struck his first in the 16th minute as his free-kick evaded everybody in a crowded penalty area.

Andy Thompson added a second two minutes later and Scott Stevenson made it three.

Sedgemore's second came after 65 minutes and it was again from a free-kick and he completed his hat-trick from the spot before Dan Brown scored a late consolation for the visitors.

Schoolboy runners help bring in bronze

TWO young Wolverhampton athletes have won bronze medals as part of a cross country team.

Jamie Ward and Harry Cresswell, both aged 15, are members of Wolverhampton and Bilston Athletics Club.

They were part of the six-strong Thomas Telford School team that won the National Schools Cross Country final team bronze medal at the Southend on Sea 4.2 km course recently.

The school team finalists in the boys and girls age groups had qualified nationally from 1,000 school teams in county and regional events over the past three months to be part of the National 25 schools in each final.

The finals consisted of the 150 qualifying runners in each age group final with the top four finishing members in each team counting towards an overall score.

The Thomas Telford teams runners in the final finished Jamie Ward (13th) Dylan Gillett (29th) Harry Cresswell (46th) Sam McGowan (48th), Ethan Rochelle (53rd) and Joel Roura made history for their school by winning its first Intermediate Boys National Cross Country final team medal.

Pawlicki to join Wolves speedway

POLISH speedway hot-shot Piotr Pawlicki has joined Wolverhampton.

The surprise signing also means American World Cup man Ricky Wells completes the Monmore side for 2014.

Talented Pawlicki, aged 19, had brief spells with Coventry and Poole but is ready for a full-time role in the UK.

He said from his home in Leszno: "I am very happy to be back racing in the British League, it's a very good country for riders to develop and learn their trade.

"All the best riders in world speedway have raced in England, so it's something I feel I must do.

"I am looking forward to riding in the same team as the world champion, Tai Woffinden."

Wolves owner Chris Van Straaten is pleased to have a new face. "Piotr comes in on a seven-point average which is pretty high."

SPORT

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Griffiths on target in Boxing Day win
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Sports Desk 01902 319531 e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Griffiths 'will be staying with us'

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett has shot down talk of Leigh Griffiths being unhappy and insisted the striker is staying put.

A radio report claimed Griffiths, who scored his 13th goal of the season in the Boxing Day 2-0 win over Crewe, hasn't settled in Wolverhampton and wants to return to Scotland.

Jackett dismissed the suggestions and said the 23-year-old will remain at Molineux while revealing he wants to strengthen the attack.

"There's no way that's the case," said the head coach when asked if Griffiths wants out. He's a big part of things here and we're looking to improve our striking department if we can.

"Letting Leigh Griffiths go would not improve it.

Griffiths was on the bench for the second successive game before arriving as a 59th-minute substitute for Dave Edwards alongside lone striker Jake Cassidy as Wolves remained second on goal difference behind leaders Leyton Orient, who come to Molineux on Sunday.

In a clear vote of no confidence in his strikeforce, Jackett axed Kevin Doyle and Bakary Sako, while Bjorn Sigurdarson didn't even make the 18 for the second time in three games after starting in the 3-3 draw at Rotherham.

Hill's double marks debut

Bilston 3 Wellington 0

BILSTON turned the tables on Wellington to avenge their 7-2 defeat in September's reverse West Midlands League fixture.

Striker Mark Swann was a constant problem to the visitors, and after just nine minutes he played in Michael Nelson, whose fizzing shot flew just wide.

On 35 minutes Bilston got the goal they'd been threatening, Danny Mason linking up with Swann, who in turn played in debutant Adam Hill to calmly slot home.

Five minutes later the lead was doubled. Mason was again the creator, his inch perfect pass into the path of Swann saw the striker get the goal he deserved.

With 10 minutes remaining, the Steelmen put the result beyond doubt when Hill unleashed an unstoppable shot from 30 yards.

Etheridge is in no rush to join paid ranks

Boxer Liam Etheridge

Boxing

BOXER Liam Etheridge insists he's in no rush to turn pro as the new national amateur champion pledged his allegiance to the unpaid ranks.

The Pleck ABC fighter, from New Invention,was crowned a title holder in the National Ambition Boxing Championships in December and made a name for himself during his run to glory.

Etheridge dumped out three-time national champion Reece Mould at the semi-final stage, before defeating England international Thomas Kindon in the final. Now the 19-year-old featherweight, a sign maker by day, has set his sights on boxing for his country for the first time, rather than turn over to the pro code.

The talented teenager even has lofty ambitions of pushing for a place on Team GB at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

He said: "When the Olympics start, I will still be 21 and I want to turn pro when I am 22 or 23. Until then, I want to enjoy the amateur game as much as I can. I have had 75 fights for Pleck and the trainers are like parents to me.

"I was 10 when I first came to Pleck and 11 when I had my first fight for them. It's like my second home and I grew up there."

At the Heart of Portsmouth Boxing Academy on December 8, Etheridge was given the nod in the title decider at 54kg in Class C, for boxers born in 1994 and 1995.

It was third time lucky for the former ABA Schoolboys and junior finalist. Etheridge said: "Nine years I waited for it, but it eventually happened. I trained twice a day, three days a week, and it paid off in the end.

"There's a lot of people to thank for it, it's not all me. I think (trainers) Terry and Tony and Terry (Leonard) were happier than me when the result was announced.

"It was a tough fight in the final. He came back strong, but I kept my guard tight and stood my ground.

"It was a majority decision, which made me worry it was going to go the other way. But when he raised my hand, I jumped up and screamed."

FANS' FAITH BRINGS HOPE OF NEW GLORY

Wolves 1 Leyton Orient 1

BEYOND the final scoreline of a cursed 12 months there was hope, surely, that 2014 beckons with a more positive outlook.

For a start, it was good to close the year in a setting which reminded everyone of the club Wolves want to be again.

A holiday crowd meant Molineux was all-but packed and noisy once more, factors which may have explained something of the significant upgrade in the players' performance.

The tumultuous events of 2013 have brought in many new faces some of whom – maybe even Jackett himself – might have privately wondered whether Wolves were 'still all that.'

Could the old place still punch the weight of the club's reputation?

Rousing

They won't be wondering anymore. This was a rousing old occasion which served as a stirring reminder to all of Molineux's decision-makers that if and when they get it right again there is still a public out there thirsting to get loud and vibrant with them.

And perhaps significantly, Jackett's players responded with a performance which suggested that finally Wolves are starting to make the advance the club craves.

Make no mistake Leyton Orient, those durable League One leaders who just will not fade from the race, could and should have been blown away in as good a 45 minutes as Molineux has witnessed maybe all year.

Football

Of course, it's a familiar story that the team were unable to press home the advantage of a thrilling early goal from Ethan Ebanks-Landell but such was the urgency, the tempo and at last the flow of Wolves' football, it was easier to forgive their profligacy.

Wolves have kept their noses in front until now because of vital edges in both penalty areas and their sheer tenacity but have only rarely overwhelmed opponents.

Wolves' domination was forged on the most commanding outing yet of the Kevin McDonald and Jack Price midfield base.

Price, increasingly impressive, had to be withdrawn at half-time because of injury but McDonald went on to produce the type of game Wolves have not seen from him for far too long.

With this pair driving their team forward, Henry, Jacobs and Bakary Sako were released to search for the openings.

However, Orient managed a 59th minute excursion towards the North Bank which ended with Mattieu Baudry converting Moses Odujabo's cross.

Wolves defenders worked diligently and successfully to cut down any threat and it was cruel that on their one

Wolves striker Jake Cassidy attempts to get on the end of this cross on what was a frustrating afternoon for him

Jacobs keen to stay on

MICHAEL Jacobs has insisted he would welcome a Wolves loan extension after declaring he wants to help them win promotion.

The 22-year-old winger's loan from Derby expires after the Gillingham away game on January 3.

But head coach Kenny Jackett has hinted he is keen to keep Jacobs, who scored his first goal for the club in the 2-0 win against Crewe on Boxing Day. Asked if he would welcome an extension if it came, Jacobs said: "Definitely.

"The boys are doing really well and it's a nice place to be. The standard of football is really high and it's a good club to play for and I'm grateful for the opportunity.

"Hopefully I can keep that going and depending on what happens in January, we'll see."

Jacobs, who has played six games for the club, wants to stay to help Jackett's side return to the Championship.

"To get back to the Championship is a massive league and hopefully if we get back there, we can get to the Premier League as well."

Jacobs admits he has had a new lease of life since swapping the East Midlands for the West Midlands.

Hughes hits five as Khalsa romp

Sporting Khalsa 8 Bromyard Town 0 – West Midlands Regional League

RUTHLESS Khalsa enjoyed a Christmas feast with a eight-goal thumping of Bromyard Town with top scorer Liam Hughes bagging five.

Mark Habbershaw added two, one a penalty and Ben Love sealed an impressive victory.

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